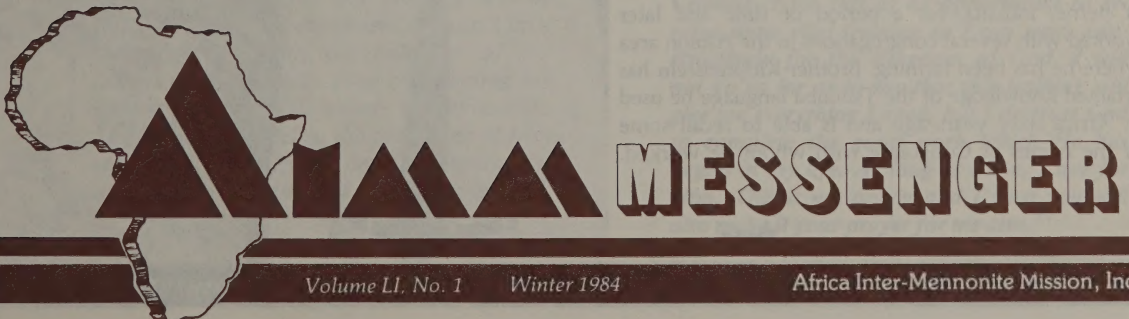




Lesotho stonecutter, Ntate Rakhoabi



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Editorial

Photo credits: p. 2 James Bertsche; p. 3 Charles Buller; pp. 4-7, 9 Karen & Titus Guenther; p. 8 Levi Keidel; p. 11 B. Harry Dyck; p. 14 Richard Hirschler

the cover —

Shaping the local sandstone in Lesotho for building blocks has been a highly developed skill that unfortunately is becoming a lost art. Many of the older buildings in Lesotho are evidence of the patient labour of workmen in the past. So too, where the Church exists there is evidence of the Holy Spirit's spiritual building of God. See page 12.

Cover photo by Bob Gerhart

Into the second decade...

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission has now completed a decade of ministry in the southern African country of Lesotho. During this time eighteen workers have been involved under AIMM sponsorship. Eight are currently serving in Lesotho, a nation that in 1983 celebrated the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries in 1833. See page 9.



Sixty years later...

AIMM's oldest living missionaries are the Reverend and Mrs. Henry Klopfenstein, now living in Albion, Indiana. The Klopfensteins served in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) for one term, going out in 1923! Since there were no provisions for education of missionary children on the field in those days, they remained in the States after their return in 1926. Reverend Klopfenstein pastored the Evangelical Mennonite Church at Berne, Indiana, for a period of time and later worked with several congregations in the Albion area where he has been farming. Brother Klopfenstein has retained knowledge of the Tshiluba language he used in Africa sixty years ago and is able to recall some of the names of Congolese with whom he worked.



Rev. and Mrs. Henry Klopfenstein

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Eli and Manango

youth aglow

From Brother Eli —

"Christ came to look for and save the lost, of which I am one.

"Born in a Christian family, the son of a pastor, I was yet far from knowing the love, the grace and the forgiveness of God as manifested through Jesus Christ. Before God I was dead in sin. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

"One day in 1980, in a hospital bed, someone spoke to me of the mercy of God, of His love, and of His grace for me. This person then encouraged me to go to a Bible camp conducted by the Bible Reading League. It was there that I said, 'Yes, here I am, Lord.' I received Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord and His Spirit regenerated me. (Titus 3:5)

"From that day on my life changed and from day to day I see the guiding of the Spirit in my life, giving me strength to go out and tell others of the love of Christ. (Romans 8:14, Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19) In all truth I was transformed and made a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"I trust and consecrate my life to Christ. (Romans 12:1,2) Jesus is faithful to complete His good work in me. Amen!

"The objectives of my ministry are: to fulfill the great Commandment of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20); the imitation of the fathers of the faith in view of orienting my ministry toward evangelism (1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17); the producing of fruit that abides (John 15:16); and the preparations of campaigns in the task of an evangelist."

Committed young people in the city of Kinshasa are representing their Saviour in significant ministries.

Charles Buller asked two of these young believers to share their testimonies briefly.

From Sister Manango —

"I was born in a pagan family. During my youth my parents spoke of a supreme being but it was always in a legendary manner. When I was ready to begin school they enrolled me in a Mennonite Institute. It was there that I felt the desire to work for God whom I knew only in the vaguest sense.

"This urge remained with me until the death of my father. I was fifteen years old. We were seven children so our relatives were forced to divide us between the brothers and sisters of my father. I was taken in by the little brother of my father and it was then my difficulties began. I was in much need of consolation and counsel, but instead I became an instrument of work. In short order the joy of life turned into bitterness.

"At a cousin's house a Christian girl shared that Jesus could set me free. I came to a personal decision for Jesus in 1980.

"Recently a door has opened for me to follow a training program with Campus Crusade. I see this as an opportunity to receive some vital training so I can work constructively for the Kingdom of God. I will not go so far as to say that this training will give me everything I need, but I do trust God to complete the good work which He has begun in my life. As long as I live, I live for Him. This is my prayer and I trust you will also make it your prayer for me also."

special assignment

by Titus & Karen Guenther

Special assignment! Unusual assignment. At least unusual for AIMM. Not everyday has the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission been invited to place a chaplain at a national university. But that was the invitation extended in 1980 from the Protestant leadership responsible for their section of the chaplaincy program at the National University of Lesotho, (NUL).

Located in the beautiful Roma valley about twenty miles east of Lesotho's capital, Maseru, NUL has grown to a student body of 1300. Chaplains are provided by the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Protestant communions. The Protestant sector is represented by the oldest denomination in the nation, the Lesotho Evangelical Church, (LEC). Through contacts LEC leadership has had with Mennonite personnel of AIMM and MCC during the past decade, a request was made for a person who could teach some courses in the religion and theology departments of the University, be a chaplain available to Protestant students, and provide leadership to an LEC congregation that meets on the campus.

Titus and Karen Guenther from Toronto, Ontario, were asked to serve in this special assignment. Titus grew up in Paraguay and Karen is originally from Steinbach, Manitoba.

The Guenthers arrived with their infant daughter, Angelika, in September 1981. Since then a variety of experiences and lessons in multi-cultural communications have filled their days. Here they share some of these along with insights and discoveries.



Welcoming Kekeletso Sekhamane as member of the Church

Titus writes:

I serve the Lesotho Evangelical Church as chaplain and pastor at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and teach part time at the LEC Theological College (seminary). In a church that is celebrating its 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries, one may wonder why it should continue to invite expatriate mission workers. Several people with adequate qualifications and talents could take over the chaplaincy post at NUL, but in a couple of cases, at least, the candidates and the church leaders are unable to overcome their past differences. I do not so much wish to explore the reasons for why a church so well established needs to import a chaplain from abroad as to give a few samples of my work here.

What does my missionary role consist of? In terms of the Great Commission the emphasis probably falls less on bringing the Christian witness here and 'making disciples of all the nations' and more on 'teaching them to observe all the commands I gave you.' Perhaps it is here, if anywhere, that our ministry in this country and at NUL finds a measure of support. It would seem quite possible, in the light of the history of churches of the West, to have the Gospel among us for a long time and still not 'observe all the commands' Jesus gave us. And to establish whether the Gospel is known or understood in its fulness, nothing seems more helpful than frank dialogue between members of different Christian traditions.

Perhaps because of the socio-political atmosphere in which we find ourselves, classroom and informal discussions quite naturally turn to questions like how a responsible Christian should respond to situations of racism, socio-economic oppression, and institutional or systemic injustice and violence. Questions of this nature come up both in the university and seminary classrooms.

At the seminary we read in church history that, perhaps there was not only one Reformation but many; that the pacifist wing of the Hussite reform movement called itself "the First Reformation," and in contrast to the imperial reformers, took the Sermon on the Mount seriously.

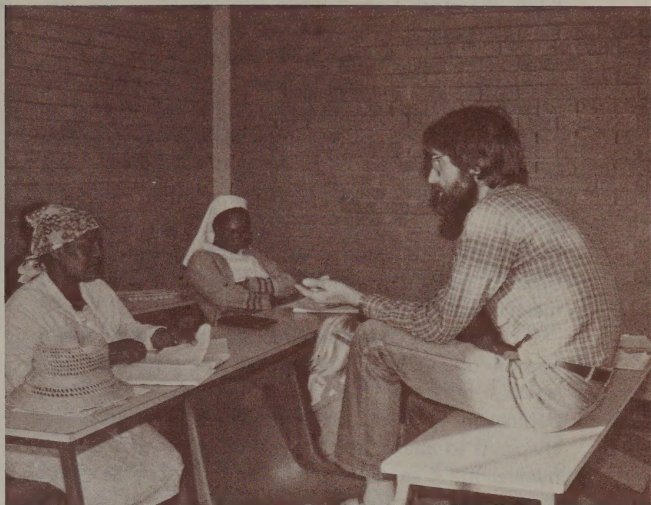
But my students found this lesson unacceptable and disturbing. They rejected the validity of this lesson because if we took the Hussite pacifists seriously, we might have to accept the Sermon on the Mount as normative for our social ethics.

In a practical theology course at NUL we discover that Jesus also encountered imperialist exploitation by the Romans but rejected the violent program of the Zealots, not because it changes too much but because it changes too little. The old tactics of violence cannot produce a truly new society. It is not easy to say how far the students accepted this finding. Several essays on related topics would indicate that they were convinced by the argument, but at least one honest student was unable to adopt this position. While she congratulated those who take such a stand, she said she found it impossible to love her enemies and could therefore not "pray all of the Lord's prayer."

In a course on Bible, we find that not even Revelation, for all its bloody judgement scenes, offers support for violent revolutionary strategy because the whole book must be read in the light of 'the Lamb that was slain.' (Ch. 5). The fifth rider or the 'Lamb of wrath' judges and conquers evil by soaking his robe in his own blood rather than that of his enemies. (Rev. 19).

In a class on Liberation Theology we learn from a bishop in Brazil that the change of social structures must be accompanied by a change of the mind and the heart. Otherwise such a change will be hollow. This man of the church tells us that since the Gospel, especially the Sermon on the Mount, is the Christian's guide, he cannot seek change through violent means.

But much of my missionary presence takes place outside the classroom. I asked some of the more politicized students whether they had gone to see the film, Ghandi. They said they had not because they know his non-violent action strategy would certainly not work in today's situation.



Titus Guenther and NUL students

My review of the booklet, *Militarism and the World Military Order* (1980), appeared in the *South African Outlook*, 1983. The Vice Chancellor of the University responded in a letter which I quote with permission:

"To learn that the world spends one million dollars per minute on military forces and weapons is really shocking. But more shocking still is to learn that at the same time thirty to forty million people die of starvation and that it would take only 17 billion dollars in order to provide adequate food, housing, education and health to the entire world's population for a year. That five hundred billion dollars are spent annually on military expenses is also shocking. But is it not even more shocking to learn that three quarters of the international arms trade goes to the Third World? I have read with great interest your Book Review . . ."

Recently I sent to an NUL graduate, now a principal of a high school, a meditation which I gave in her church. She wrote back:

"The paper on 'What is the role of women in the Church?' came at a time when my administration of the school had made me clash with some of the authorities of the church, but reading it gave me such power that you may not believe when I say there seems to be growing peace, and I hope, through the love of Christ, everything will be alright. The staff members were also pleased with the paper, especially the women. It was as if the paper was making them realize their importance. Fortunately the paper does not degrade men, so it is a fair paper . . ."

continued on next page

In another casual conversation with a highly articulate member of our congregational committee I learned the difference in outlook of Western and African peoples. Central to the Western Person is a philosophy of "I think, therefore I am," while Africans say, "We are, therefore I am." One is basically individualistic, the other community oriented. My friend, who has a B.A. in theology and philosophy from NUL explained that this notion of interdependence was at the core of all initiation ritual. By undergoing initiation, the candidate was saying he or she cannot make himself or herself a mature truthful human being. Only other men and women can do this. It was his feeling that former missionaries dismissed that cultural custom of the Basotho too hastily without first examining its intended meaning carefully.

If church and chapel services are attended by only a fraction of the LEC students on campus, memorial services bring out just about the whole university population. The Student Council always invites the chaplains to attend and to lead in prayer and a short meditation. A student by the name of Abel had been stabbed to death. As chaplains we decided each of us would pray for certain individuals involved in the tragedy. Several months later a member of the faculty recalled with admiration, "They even prayed for the murderer!" Somebody had noticed and been touched.

I have been involved in creating a film course in the Theology department at NUL. Students here seem relatively new to the film medium and possess little ability of choosing and evaluating films. For example, one group of Christian students on campus wished to raise funds by showing a film. Since they had not gotten around to acquiring their own choice of film, they simply borrowed one from the local Karate Club, all about Chicago gambling gangs. When asked, they failed to see why the means and the end should be related to each other. We hope to use this course to better equip students with criteria for assessing films, as well as providing a basis for a study in Christian ethics.

Thus my missionary activities consist of a combination of my formal assignment and informal interaction with people outside this assignment. Many things I had assumed I would do have not materialized. Most come for help in getting scholarships. But many things which I had not expected have come as gifts to me in the form of fruitful communication. Failure and success tend to follow one another but I continue to draw strength from the closing words of the Great Commission: "And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

—Titus Guenther



Titus at his desk



Chapel on NUL Campus, Roma



Angelika Guenther and her friend, Tsepo

Karen Guenther has had a unique perspective in education in Lesotho since she enrolled as a student at the National University of Lesotho. She writes:

I just finished a semester of four courses and two exams for the "Post-graduate Certificate in Education." Some of the things I have learned include: religious development of young children, teaching about literature to children, communicative language teaching (teaching English as a second language), and giving an English lesson to secondary students in Lesotho schools.

Twice I went with a bus-load of third-year students out to schools in the countryside to do a practice teaching session. That experience proved to be the most interesting of all in terms of getting to know fellow students, as well as seeing some of the schools and experiencing how cooperative and eager these young students are.

Being an education student on the University campus is not strictly an academic exercise. I am learning much about this society and have been able to clarify my own views through sharing opinions with others.

We were discussing the story and call of Moses in my religious education class. My tutorial presentation on how Moses was prepared to be a good leader raised some questions: "Wasn't Moses justified in killing the Egyptian? Was this part of God's plan? Didn't God give Moses his power so he could defend himself by killing that taskmaster?"

I mentioned that the story tells us that Moses had to suffer the consequences of what he did. God does not use such acts of violence to show that Moses was more powerful than the Egyptian. Moses had to identify with his people by leaving his privileged life, and suffering exile, poverty, and the serving of a strange master, to better prepare him for leadership. He had to wait until he was ready to receive God's call. I asked whether this did not show that Moses did wrong in killing the Egyptian.

One of the class concluded that God must be very patient and forgiving because He kept on following Moses until he was ready to respond to the call to lead his people out of slavery. This story came alive in a special way for these students because of their particular situation.

In another class on Education and Society, our lecturer quoted someone saying "families and schools should reflect the values and norms of the larger society." The class went on to discuss the churches' role in running the schools in Lesotho and asked whether they reflect Basotho society's norms. Many concluded that the churches do not reflect Basotho society because they are the ones who brought Western culture, often at the expense of indigenous culture.

This lack of sensitivity is of course a serious problem, but in the discussion that followed, the assumption seemed to be, from both students and lecturer, that as the government gradually takes over the educational system, uniformity under one government should be the highest goal.

I asked whether there were not certain values in any society that also need to be challenged. I cited as an example the existence of church schools in Canada that serve as alternatives to the public education system because they believe religious teaching is lacking in that system. I asked whether the churches in Lesotho had a role to play in that regard.

The students agreed that religious instruction is a necessary part of the school curriculum in Lesotho, and this is the responsibility of the churches. There is a serious shortage of trained teachers in this area, however, and the number of students who choose religious education or theology as their major subject is very small. This is an area where sensitive missionaries could have a significant contribution to make for a long time to come.



Have you hugged your child today?

Karen and Angelika



— Karen Guenther



Lake Munkamba

Munkamba Weekend

Tshikaji Students Spiritual Life Retreat

by Marjorie Neuenschwander

Lake Munkamba is a perfect setting for a retreat, but His presence made it all the more perfect. Charles Buller, a youth worker in Kinshasa, who radiates the love of Jesus, accepted our invitation to be speaker along with Don Unruh, a pastor working with the churches in Kitwit. The two of them made a dynamic duo! Pastor Mukuna and Pastor Ilunga shared in giving the Word at the retreat, as well.

I was able to find many praise choruses that were in French, which I already knew in English. Faye, our pathologist, helped me translate other choruses into French. A student from our lab school volunteered to help me on the guitar. Our worship in song was a big part of the retreat. I've led music before, but not so much in worship of the Lord. The students were animated and it was a delight to be there and witness the joy of the Lord.

The Zairian minister was powerful! I've never heard a Zairian preach as he did. Our theme was "Be healed, to heal." We had preaching from Matthew, Ezekiel, and Hebrews. I wish I could tell you all but time and paper doesn't permit. It was beautiful to know again how ready He is to heal us, if only we would be so ready to receive what He has for us.

Since the retreat, several students have asked that they have a prayer time together with Faye and me. So we began Thursday night. We had seven for prayer at my apartment. We continue to hear the students singing the eighteen choruses that they learned even as we walk through the hospital or are near the dorm. Pray with us that students will continue to experience the power of God in their lives as they grow in His Word.

Friday night fifty students out of seventy-two went forward for deliverance. They were on their knees with arms around each other praying. Those of us who weren't up front were at our places on our knees. I was in tears knowing that the power of the Lord was at work in us all! I praise the Lord for His faithfulness to us His children.



Marjorie Neuenschwander helps train nurses in the Nurses Training School at IMCK, the joint Presbyterian and Mennonite teaching hospital at Tshikaji near the urban center of Kananga.



CHANGE IN PLANS

DAN & KATHY PETERSEN, Upper Volta, made an emergency medical trip home in January. They were spending the Christmas holidays with friends in Le Chambon, France. While there, Dan had not been feeling well, was coughing and losing weight. Xrays showed a curious opaque spot on his lung and doctors suspected TB.

After consultation, it was decided that Petersens would come to the States for medical tests and care.

Upon arrival in Minneapolis Dan was immediately hospitalized and placed in isolation. Further testing ruled out TB. Dan is being treated for a possible fungus infection and is somewhat improved, but will need continued rest and medical supervision.

Dan and Kathy will be making their home in Morton, IL until May and the arrival of their first child. They plan to return to Upper Volta as soon as doctors give Dan a clean bill of health.

March Meeting in Ontario

AIMM Spring Board Meeting will be March 23-25, at the Waterloo - Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ontario. Peter Sawatzky, board member, is the pastor. Among items to be presented is a revision of the AIMM Handbook and several new missionary candidates. A Mission Rally is scheduled for Sunday evening at the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church, 19 Ottawa North, Kitchener.



ROOFS NEEDED

A TIME FOR REBUILDING:

It's been twenty years since the AIMM church center at Kandala was caught in the destructive wave of Zaire's Kwilu rebellion in 1964. Many of those experiences are the basis for Levi Keidel's book Caught in the Crossfire.

While the church building, some school and medical units, were rebuilt some years ago two residences have stood gutted and roofless. Since their complete repair is too costly for the local congregation to bear, a special project has been established to roof the Kandala houses. \$5,000 is needed above and beyond normal AIMM budgeted monies. Contributions for the Kandala project can be forwarded to AIMM.



Revival at Mukedi!

by Andrew Rupp, AIMM Board Chairman

Mukedi is one of the district centers of the church in Zaire. In earlier years it was one of the main AIMM mission stations. In recent years no missionaries have been stationed there. For the past several years it has been a problem area for the national church and the mission. Dissension and division among church leaders of the district along with the people in general have characterized the situation.

But God was at work. A revival movement in the neighboring district was spilling over. The Holy Spirit was stirring people to repentance and reconciliation. Reporting on a visit of four days to Mukedi, missionary Don Unruh spoke of participating in a day of fasting and prayer, special services, early morning prayer times with large groups present, Bible study and sharing times. Referring to his first full day there he wrote: "We sensed the leading of the Lord throughout the day as we lifted various concerns before Him in prayer..I sensed the liberating presence of Jesus..I was overwhelmed for the people of Mukedi, and I sensed such a great love that it was hard for me to control tears. A great conviction came upon me for the gospel, and it was with renewed joy and liberty that I began to preach. I could tell that the word was hitting the mark, that the audience was with me; they were responding; there was spontaneous singing...we had experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit with us."



CONTACT

staying in touch with AFRICA



blueberries & baco bits?!



A CATERPILLAR STORY

By Katherine Fountain, Zaire

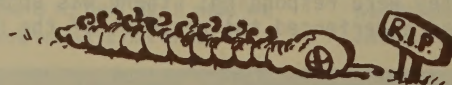
You have to see it to believe it! If you have ever been blueberrying, caterpillaring is quite a similar experience, only much juicier. My friend carefully pointed out the species of tree on which the caterpillars feed. Their branches were indeed laden with caterpillars. She demonstrated how to pluck the creatures from the branches and flip them into the pails. It was quite a technique!

My relationship with caterpillars started when I mentioned to one of my friends from our bible study group that I might like to go with her one day to experience the collecting process. With another friend and all her children, we headed to the caterpillar "orchards" at 5 a.m. It was a lovely moonlight walk, about 6 kilometers, to the scrubby trees on which the caterpillars feed. Three-quarters of the people in the village went. Quite a stampede! By daylight we arrived at the appropriate location. Everyone parked along the dusty banks of the road for a picnic breakfast including last night's leftover caterpillars.

It took me an hour and a half to get used to the squishy feeling of the critters as I wrested them from their contented munching. As I plucked them, they squirted a green liquid all over my hands which sticks and dries like Elmer's glue. Perhaps I never really did get used to the feeling, only that my hands got so caked there was no longer sensation in them. After I had been at it all morning, my friend could still pluck eight caterpillars for every one of mine!

By about 11:30 our party decided to head for home back through the tall grass. Each carried a bucket, pot or basin full of their catch--a seething, black and yellow, oozing mass. Such wonder and glee when they discovered that even a white person could catch caterpillars!

After some intense scrubbing, I took my bucketful of trophies to my friend so she could show me how to prepare them. She tenderly washed the mass of still squirming creatures. Then over a fire she boiled them in a big pot, adding salt and red-hot pepper, then spread them to dry in the sun. Once dry, they can be stored for months. They are a valuable source of protein during the year to come. The taste? A bit akin to baco-bits; crunchy and salty.



THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Room for improvement is the largest room in the world.

• • •

If you see someone without a smile today, give him one of yours.

• • •

God's clock is never slow, but sometimes ours is fast.

• • •

Gentle words fall lightly, but they have great weight.

• • •

Never withhold what another needs because of your conflict or poor relationship.

• • •

Road sign in the mid-west:
Be carefull which rut you choose, you will be in it for the next 25 miles.

• • •



Welcome...

Births:

Mark Ryan Claassen, to Cleon and Elizabeth (Martens) Claassen, Dec. 17, 1983. Rudy and Elvina are proud grandparents.

Miriam Monique Kampen Entz, to Loren & Donna Entz, Upper Volta, Jan. 26, 1984.

comings & goings

January Departures:

Glen & Phyllis Boese for Le Chambon and French study.

Earl & Ruth Roth and Leona Schrag for Zaire.

Herman & Ruth Buller for Zaire.

Henry & Naomi Unrau, and girls, for Botswana.

Gordon & Jarna Claassen, and Joshua, Zaire to Le Chambon for French study.



With Gratitude...

KELENDENDE LWADI is a student at ISTK in Kinshasa under scholarship from the AIMM Women's Auxiliary. She writes: "Thank you again, for the good will of the mamas who have kindly wished to add a scholarship for me. The school year has passed quite well, especially in the area of studies. As for that which concerns the situation at the house, our two children having caught the measles, both were sick at the same time. We had fear, my husband and I, because this sickness kills children here in Kinshasa, but we took our burdens to the Saviour, for whom moreover, we are here. He heard our prayers, in spite of the seriousness of the malady which fell upon our children. He has healed the two children. After the healing, they had lost weight, but fortunately Mme Anne Falk came to us with help, by giving us powdered milk, sugar, oranges, and still other things to give them. Thanks to this (the help) the children have regained their health.

I greatly thank you again, for your prayer for us, and we do not neglect to ask of you, to again place us in the hands of our Saviour, because this year as third year students, we must work very much. May God lease unto you a long life!"



Thanks for the bean...

Shirley Ries, Zaire:

"I'm spending more time in the garden because I find that my presence helps things along a little, the plants and the work! I have been praising the Lord for every green bean I pick!"

— o — o —

Sandra Friesen, in French language study: "As you read (my letter) you will notice my English becoming worse but hopefully this indicates my French is getting better!"



"Outreach '84, a Conference for World Christians," will convene at Ft. Wayne Bible College, March 30-31. The conference is expected to attract more than 200 participants and will explore many facets of world missions from an educational and vocational perspective.

Keynote speakers will be Don Jacobs, Executive Director, The Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation, and Rev. Billy Simbo, principal of Sierra Leone Bible College. The Rev. Simbo is presently doing post-graduate studies in the United States.

AIMM, three Mennonite Conferences, The Missionary Church and Ft. Wayne Bible College are sponsoring the conference. AIMM staff is participating in planning and as workshop leaders.

FOCUS ON FORGOTTEN PEOPLES



URGENT NEED

Two persons with mechanical ability to work in the Kalandia Maintenance and Transport Department, Zaire.

1). One a longer-term person with broad mechanical background in both gasoline and diesel equipment. This person should be ready to leave North America no later than January '85 for 6 months language study in France before arriving in Zaire in July of '85.

2). A VS person, able to relieve and assist above person with work load. Could begin immediately.

If you are interested or have suggestions, contact James Bertsche at the AIMM office as soon as possible.

Our twelve days in the village were terrific! We got a jump on the language, made friends, established some relationships, and had the privilege of observing the lifestyle of the Basotho. We were part of an extended family, living in the midst of a clan. Our houses were close together and we were surrounded by the comings and goings of the people.

A friend, Maphinase, supplied our daily water from a spring and helped me with our laundry although I suspect I was more of a hindrance than a help with the washing of clothes. We had an outhouse "out back" and a big galvanized tub for personal washing. We bathed by the coal stove, heating water on it and taking turns bathing in the dimly lit kitchen. We laugh as we picture ourselves all crunched up in the tin tub. The children squabbled, "It's too hot, it's too cold, I don't want to go last, the water will be too dirty, we don't want to bathe!" "I'm not going to the out-house alone, no way, no sir!"

There was no store nearby so we walked six miles to another village. We met many interesting people on the way. They all wanted to know, "Why are you here? Where do you come from?" The next week we took a bus to another town 1½ hours away. I have never seen so many people on a bus and just when I thought the bus would explode we would stop and pick up more people! There were many mothers with their little ones on their backs and boxes or bundles on their heads. The bus driver would go so fast down the hills that I thought surely we would drive right off the ends of the earth. I was thankful for the stops, if for no other reason than to slow us down.

The village children were wonderful. The little boys stayed out of school to take care of the livestock. Even the littlest would run behind cattle or donkeys with bits of branches fashioned into whips. The big event was rolling tires along the paths. My kids weren't nearly as adept at this and more than once came in exasperated because their tire rolled into the cattle pen! The children got on very well in the village. One day I glanced up the road and there were the children in the back of an ox cart with all the other kids heading heaven only knows where. I found them helping do laundry down by the river, or stirring a great stick around and around in a huge black three-legged pot. One day I saw Ruth, Sarah and Tabai in the tin tub being carried across the kraal by two older girls and the village dogs trailing dutifully behind.

We attended church in a small house of mud, thatching and tin. The service was quite formal and not unduly lengthy. During the week we met informally with our new friends, having them for tea, meals, or just a visit and prayer together. We found the people very warm and friendly. We were never lonely.

from the Theological Institute
in Kinshasa known as ISTK.

Pete & Gladys Buller, Zaire:

Pete: "I greatly enjoy my teaching at ISTK. Recently I met a student who graduated in '82. He now serves a city congregation of 800 members. Pastor Malanga was enthusiastic about his work and said ISTK had given him excellent training to minister. Knowing there are a few hundred "Malangas" who are now useful in the life of the church is what makes being in church leadership training so satisfying."

Gladys: The church which meets on campus is under one of our former students and attendance has tripled. The auditorium is always full. On the first day of each month there is a large rally of all prayer groups. The place is packed! What joy there is in seeing such enthusiasm, prayer, worship, testimonies and good music! The Spirit has done a great thing among us!"

*Doodling during the
Board Meeting discussion
of the Budget
resulted in...*



A Global Figure



Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
224 West High Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46516

prepared by AIMM Communications



LESOTHO.

One hundred fifty years were commemorated in Lesotho as 1983 marked the Sesquicentennial of the beginning of Christian mission in that Mountain Kingdom.

It was June 28, 1833 when three courageous young men met the great paramount chief, Moshoeshoe (Moh-shway-shway) at his mountain stronghold on the flat-topped hill known as Thaba Bosiu. These missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS), Eugene Casalis, Rev. Arbousett and Mr. Gosselin were responding to a request by Moshoeshoe for the "men with the Book from God" who could bring peace to his troubled land. The French missionaries had originally intended to work near Robert Moffat close to the Botswana border but were providentially diverted and while moving inland as a step of faith were directed to respond to the renowned mountain chief's invitation.

While Moeshoeshoe himself did not make a public profession of faith in Christ until late in his life he was always open to the Gospel and encouraged both its proclamation and reception among his people. He allowed many areas of his life to be shaped by the teachings of Scripture even before his own declaration of faith at the close of his life. It seems the turning of the chieftainship over to his son left him free to make this individual decision and commitment apart from the will of the tribe as a whole which the chief was to reflect.

Out of the initial evangelism and teaching ministries grew a Christian Church to be known as the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC). This Presbyterian style church, in the Reformed tradition, constitutes the largest Protestant denomination by far in Lesotho today, claiming nearly one fourth of the population among its adherents. Morija, named for Mt. Moriah of Abraham's day, became the mission and church center. Morija, located at the base of a long, flat-topped mountain a day's ride from Thaba Bosiu, became the site of schools, a theological college, hospital and a large printing press. These continue along with church offices as a significant center of activity today.



Lesotho Evangelical Church Sesquicentennial

150



Anniversary celebrations at Morija

In keeping with AIMM's policy in Southern Africa to assist, where possible, churches that already exist, AIMM personnel have worked alongside LEC leadership in several ministries. Ten years ago Allen and Marabeth Busenitz first worked with the LEC Youth Department in Morija as the first AIMM workers in Lesotho. Titus and Karen Guenther, in their involvement at the National University of Lesotho relate to the LEC parish on campus as well as teaching part time at the Morija Theological College. Other mission persons have shared their gifts and abilities with local congregations. Mennonite Central Committee personnel have served in a variety of LEC schools in several areas of the country.

On the occasion of this Sesquicentennial of the Gospel witness in the mountains of Southern Africa, AIMM rejoices, along with the Christian community there, in the spiritual fruit of that 1833 planting. May the same foundational truths of Scripture, as shared by those early workers, continue to be the foundation for today's generation of the Church.

Irvin and Lydia Friesen are AIMM Bible teachers with Independent Church leadership in Botswana.



African Independent Church near Maun, Botswana

Strengths

AND WEAKNESSES

A View of African Independent Churches

by Irvin Friesen



Assistants with the founder of the Head Mountain Church of God Apostolic Church in Zion, Francistown, Botswana

African Independent Churches have become the object of much study, but still are not completely understood by outsiders.

There is a great spectrum of belief and practice in the various groups. It is almost impossible to make a comprehensive statement that would cover all groups. In general, however, there are similarities.

Dr. Harold W. Turner points out that "their main achievement seems to consist of a radical breakthrough, from pagan idolatry and worship of a number of divinities, to worship of the one true, living, loving, and all-powerful God of the Christian Scriptures."

Because of our many years of work in Zaire where traditional religion is still a living religion, and having noticed traditional practices within the African Independent Churches, we have discussed this with members of those churches. Not once have they admitted any relationship between their practices and paganism. They insist that their practices are biblical and usually give chapter and verse upon which their practices are based. Not every detail corresponds but the similarity is there.

Nor do they seek to appease their dead ancestors to affect healing, but instead claim God's power. Recently we were talking to a colleague of the late prophet and founder of the Spiritual Healing Church. He claimed no help from spirit or ancestor, but said, "God works through my hands."

That these churches should have made this break with paganism is all the more remarkable because this breakthrough is not complete within many mission churches. Even in older mission churches there exists what has been called "contact religion," where a person turns to Jesus Christ for salvation, but when a crisis arises, he reverts, seeking help from pagan "doctors" and spirits. Western Christianity, as understood by a great many African Christians, does not meet their total need.



African Independent Church Women

Another strength within the African Independent Churches is their ministry to the total needs of their members. Whatever crisis may arrive in their lives, they take it to the church or to the leader within whom the power of God resides. The church has completely replaced the pagan "doctors," spirits, and magic. Although counseling and treatments are also given, prayer holds a predominant place. One typical Sunday, five special requests were submitted. A group of girls were leaving home for secondary school; they requested prayer. A man was mailing three applications for work, so he brought the three letters to church to be prayed over. A young couple came requesting prayer for God's help and blessing as they planned their wedding. One man had lost his driver's license but had now gotten a job to drive a truck. He asked for prayer that he might get his license back. The fifth request was for health for a sick child. The church supplies the support necessary for all of life. The Independent Churches' biblical orientation and focus on prayer are points in their favor.

Another strength is the nature of their worship. Dr. Turner says: "As another Christian achievement, we may mention the collective and active nature of worship in the independent churches and the signs of Christian joy in these people of God. Unlike so much of the worship in the older churches, there is a minimum of passive listening to a minister and of watching him do most things for the congregation. There is a total response in voice and action, through clapping, dancing, choruses, ejaculations, individual spontaneous prayers, and public thanksgivings. A warm community life undergirds this active corporate worship."

The total participation and festive spirit occupies much of the two, three or more hours they meet. Although wearisome to the body it is refreshing to the soul.

Unfortunately, some of the weaknesses of the movement undermine some of its strengths. Perhaps the greatest weakness is its lack of trained leadership. Although the movement is oriented toward the Bible there is a lack of proper understanding of what the Bible really teaches. This leads to the adoption of Old Testament rituals and practices and to extreme literalistic applications of Scripture. Examples of this include God's injunctions to Aaron and his sons to wear holy garments or for Moses to remove his shoes in God's presence, closing the doors while praying because of Jesus' teaching on prayer. Many of these may not be evil in themselves, but if the structure of the church is built on this type of biblical interpretation, the essentials of biblical truth are overlooked. Emphasis is on doing things to become a Christian instead of depending upon what Christ has already done for us. The death of Christ and the atonement figure very little in the life and thought of most of these churches. I had three of my students each survey twenty-five people at random on the street and ask three questions: What is the name of your church? Why did you join your church? and What do you like best about your church? Responses from AIC members mentioned nothing of a relationship with God or Jesus, nor about receiving biblical instruction. Invariably the responses were I joined the church because I was healed in the church. I like the church because it protects me. These churches have successfully replaced paganism but because of a lack of Bible teaching, the emphasis of the church seems to have fallen short of the essential ingredient of a Christian church which is a personal trust in and relationship with Jesus Christ.

There seems to be strong attachment to the prophet-leader of the particular church, in some cases almost becoming a "personality cult," where the prophet-leader draws people to himself. This may seem similar to strong leaders in western churches. The difference is that usually the prophet-leader claims special power from God. It is more than his personality that attracts people to him.

These Independent Churches are African churches, founded in an African culture, based on African thought and meeting the needs of Africans. Their numbers exhibit their strength. Our greatest ministry to them is to assist them to understand God's message and the new covenant Jesus has established with His Church, adding this life-giving ingredient to the church, thus helping it in its ministry to the total person.





Maseru, Lesotho

God Is in the Building Business

by Bob Gerhart



Church building at Kele, Tshikapa

A tremendous amount of construction is taking place in today's Africa. Cities change their skylines regularly. Surrounding countryside is soon covered with new suburbs, chaotic though they may be. Whether modern high-rise offices, impressive hotels, simple cement block shops or ramshackle hovels, building proceeds with only temporary cutbacks from sagging economies.

Africa is plagued by shortages of skilled manpower. Essential materials are often unavailable. Many projects stand waiting for cement, cement that may be abundant in warehouses but does not get transported to the site of construction. Strategic supplies are frequently diverted to projects less essential to the needs of the larger community. Prestige and power hinder practical responses to needed development of the economy or society. Similar dangers may threaten the spiritual life of the Christian church in Africa today.

God is in the building business. Christ Jesus promised to establish the church, and He is keeping His word. Jesus himself became the cornerstone. Across the world's longest continent the church is being built.

Within a generation of the death of David Livingstone, Mennonite Christians were converting concern for Africa into action. The first missionaries were sent to serve with existing agencies in East Africa by the first decade of the 20th century. Styles and strategies were applied in different ways. When those first workers returned to the handful of sending churches they suggested that Mennonite churches form their own mission organization. By 1912 two Mennonite groups decided to cooperate in sharing the gospel in south central Zaire. The Congo Inland Mission was born in the heartland of America to send missionaries to the heart of the Kasai River basin south of the mighty Congo. Today that cooperation, involving five Mennonite groups, is the partnership called the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

Establishing the foundation with limited tools, meager resources and remote counsel from the sending churches, those early pioneers struggled against great obstacles. They related to four main tribal groups. Using two major languages in the first generation, the living stones were shaped. Fervent bush evangelists teamed with North American missionaries. Simply taught teachers, using limited curriculum, taught others. Basic Bible lessons from those first translated portions became important additions to the cornerstone of faith. And contrary to the prediction of many mission experts, the building began to take shape. Stone upon stone, each made alive by new creation, began to fit together into a living habitation of the Spirit.

Occasionally cracks appeared in the walls. Corners have not always been aligned. But the base is sound. The process is not yet complete. Construction continues and skills of blending and shaping according to the master plan are still needed.

By the 1980's 40,000 members in hundreds of self-governing congregations were calling themselves "Mennonite" in Zaire. The churches search for understanding of what it means to be both Mennonite Christians and Christian Africans but the building stands as a testimony to the wisdom and provision of the Master Designer. And construction goes on.

Today, migration to urban centers requires creative partnership in urban ministries. Leadership training needs increased resources to fill the gaps created by rapid expansion of the Christian fellowship. The exciting and encouraging youth renewal, with its emphasis on evangelism and outreach, necessitates careful discipling of new believers without stifling the zeal and joy characteristic of the movement. Means must be found to encourage and collaborate with the Zaire churches in their own mission outreach across cultural, linguistic or geographical barriers. AIMM continues as co-laborers in the unfinished task.

In southern Africa building is often on groundwork laid by others in earlier generations. Yet the shape of the construction takes new direction as emphasis is placed on Bible teaching and leadership training. Among diverse forms of African Independent Churches the Word of God may prompt some remodeling of the structures. It must be done with care; it must not reject the design just because it differs from what mission or missionary may have desired. The blueprint of the Scriptures, not Western academic forms nor historic Mennonite cultural styles, must shape and direct the church.

Economic, political and social tensions of the regions must not destroy the hope and truth that the church represents. Workers who relate to the Spirit's construction and reconstruction in lives and nations must be willing to lay aside prejudices and preconceptions while never abandoning the "faith once delivered to the saints." Impulsively jumping to conclusions as to how previous generations should have carried out their tasks must not become an excuse for lack of compassion or integrity in relating to those God is bringing together. The church must be a living testimony of the triumph of God's love, righteousness and peace in a world divided and feeling threatened from many sides.



Putting final touches on roof, Upper Volta

In Botswana, Lesotho and the Transkei, AIMM has responded to invitations for help. These churches cannot be credited to the Mission's efforts nor are they tied to it by common history. But whether among African Spiritual Churches or in the cosmopolitan life of the international communities, workers go to serve and share with believers built on the same foundation, Jesus Christ.

In Upper Volta the foundation is just being laid. An area previously unaffected by the impact of the gospel or a living church is now seeing the first demonstrations of life in Christ as the AIMM team lives among these "unreached peoples." Language barriers prompted the strategy of linguistic and literacy emphases. People with skills and training are just beginning to penetrate languages of several tribal groups in order to make God's Word available in a written form of the mother tongue. Missionary linguistics will continue to be needed for the years ahead if the walls of the living church are to develop. A handful of national Christians is already available as part of the transcultural witness. The presence of God is slowly rising above a bleak spiritual horizon of ritual and fears, a witness to the power of transforming love.

What a tragedy it would be if just at the time the scaffolding and trained workers are in place, shortages of resources would delay the construction of a living temple for the loving God on the continent of Africa. What a loss for the cause of Christ worldwide if the blueprints were not continually followed by the sending, sharing church. What a waste if wavering faith were to declare a partially finished building sufficient and thus lay down the tools and quit. The years to come may prove to be the greatest period yet in the life of God's people on the bright continent.

Psalms of Life were written as part of a small group Bible study of the mission family at Kalonda, Zaire. They were not written with the intention of having them published but were simply personal expressions shared in their contemporary context of life.



Kalonda church service

Psalm of Life

Sing praise to His Name
Sing praise to Him in the morning
Sing praise to Him in the noontime
Sing praise to Him at night

All my waking hours will I sing praise unto You, Oh Lord.
You have given me life, You have given me strength for my day —
Bless Your Holy Name.
You have made my feet strong and swift to run for You,
Praise be the Name of the Lord.
When I awake in the morning You are present
Thank You Lord for one more day
to live in Your wonderful world.

I look around and see You in others about me —
In the small child I see Your love, Joy and Trust
Thank You, Lord, for life.

I see You in the sky, the trees, the clouds
and even hear You in the thunder
And I praise You with my whole heart

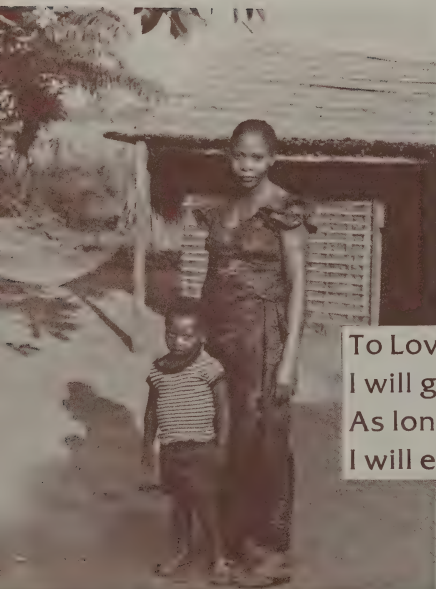
I will praise You for Your great gift of Salvation,
My soul cries out in gratitude
For such a great gift



Malenge and son

Thank You for Your Spirit
that dwells in this heart of mine.
Keep my heart filled, Oh Lord
with the peace and joy of Your presence.
Have mercy on me, Oh Lord,
When I go astray
Fill me with Your love and help me
And help me keep Your commandments

To Love others as You Love me.
I will give thanks to You, and Sing praise to Your Name,
As long as You give me breath
I will exalt the Lord of my Salvation.



Kinona and son



— Jeanette Christensen





Going & Going Back



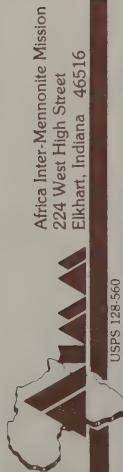
Glen and Phyllis Boese were commissioned on November 6, 1983 in their home congregation, Friedensburg Mennonite Church, Avon, South Dakota, for service in Zaire. The Boese's bring a wide range of experience and interests to their assignment. Living at Springfield, South Dakota, they raised a family of four sons and a daughter, farmed, and taught industrial arts and home economics respectively. Glen studied at Grace Bible Institute and is a graduate of Sioux Falls College and the University of South Dakota at Springfield where he was also an instructor. He earlier had earned a Master of Divinity degree from Bethany Biblical Seminary in Chicago. Phyllis graduated from South Dakota State College and the University of South Dakota. In addition to being a homemaker and teacher she was librarian for several years at Freeman Junior College. Both their mothers are still living, Mrs. Katy Boese, in the Salem Home, Freeman, and Mrs. Mary Thomas at Springfield.

Glen and Phyllis left in early January for French language study at Le Chambon, France. Earlier they spent a number of weeks at the Habitat for Humanity headquarters in Americus, Georgia as part of the orientation for their assignment in Zaire. They are scheduled to arrive in Zaire by early summer where they will live in Kikwit. They will be working with the Habitat for Humanity project which seeks to assist the Christian community with the construction of economical but adequate housing. They will relate to the Mennonite congregations in Kikwit as well.



Earl and Ruth Roth are returning to Zaire in January for their seventh term of ministry. They will be based in the capital city of Kinshasa where they will relate to the urban Mennonite churches while assisting the entire missionary team in logistical support services. The Roths are members of the Emmanuel Mennonite Church of Salem, Oregon. Ruth is the daughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. F.F. Jantzen of Paso Robles, California. Earl and Ruth have three children, Yvonne Smith of Salem, Loren, teaching in Sann'a, North Yemen, and Marc, of Ventura, California. Earl graduated from Multnomah School of the Bible, Lewis and Clark College and Oregon College of Education. He also studied at the Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Western Evangelical Seminary in Portland. Ruth is a graduate of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and Whitworth College and attended Oregon State and Portland State Universities. The Roths first went to Zaire in 1954 and have been involved in educational ministries at Mukedi, Nyanga and Djoko Punda before assuming duties in Kinshasa. Earl and Ruth have been busy with itineration during this somewhat extended furlough period while awaiting clarification of their assignment for this next term. During this time Earl was also able to take further studies at Western Evangelical Seminary while in Oregon.

Leona Schrag, of Hutchinson, Kansas, returned to Zaire in January to resume ministry in the fields of Literature and Christian Education in Tshikapa. Leona is a member of the First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie, Kansas and the daughter of Daniel and Esther Schrag of South Hutchinson. She is a graduate of Grace College of the Bible, Hutchinson Community College, and Bethel College, Newton. Leona has served three terms in Zaire since first going out in 1968. She worked in the Christian Education department of the church while based first at Mutena, then later at Kalonda. She also was a key person in the Literature production and distribution program during her last term and was able to see the new Literature and Christian Education Center completed before her furlough. She will again be working with these departments of the church. Leona will be moving into newly constructed accommodations at the CMZ Administrative Centre in Tshikapa. The last four months of her extended furlough, while waiting for the completion of housing at the Tshikapa Centre, Leona was able to do some post-graduate studies in Christian Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.



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EDITORIAL

God's Objective



Botswana

"O Come, Let us Adore Him . . ."

How often did you sing this familiar phrase during the recent Christmas season? Did you think of it as a missionary motive?

Our Saviour-Redeemer is adorable in the best sense of that word, not merely as an infant in a manger. Nor is adoration appropriate only for His profound teachings, brilliant communication or touching compassion. He is worthy of our adoration for His own sinless person as well as His startling performance. His victory and majesty require our declaration of praise. His humility and identification compel our devotion. This is worship.

Worship is confessing His worth, complimenting His work, calling attention to His wonders, and joyfully conforming to His will. This is also a motive for missions: to produce worshippers.

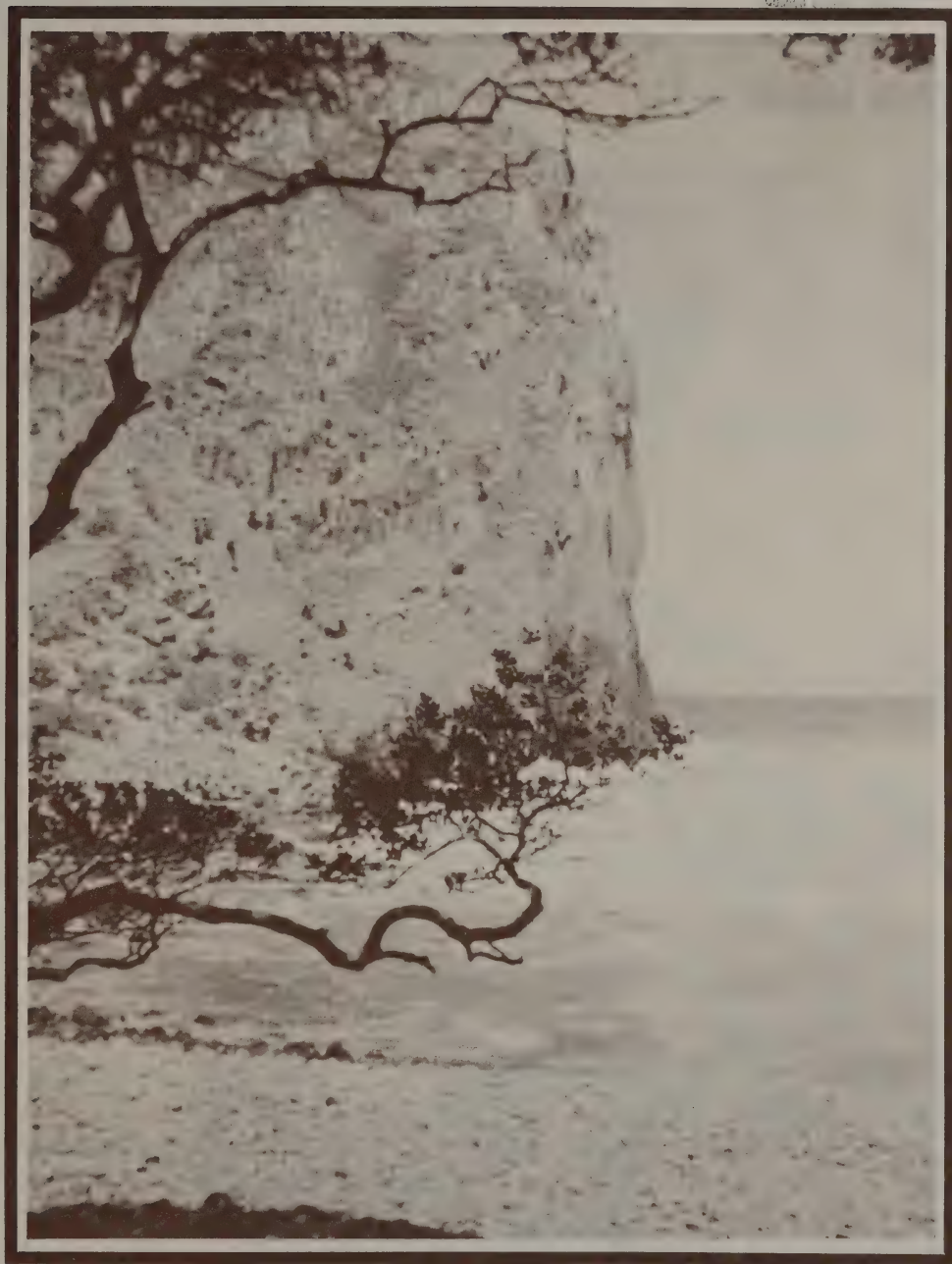
Missions is more than converts, though that is essential. It is more than compassion, though this is only reasonable. It is more than establishing churches, though that is crucial. Missions must also result in true worshippers: persons whose transformed lives focus on the worth and supremacy of their great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Missions must do more than rescue people from the emptiness of life without Christ. It must do more than bring joy or peace in a tragic and troubled existence. The work of missions is to give Good News so they, too, can join in the adoration of the One who stooped in love, Who shared in humiliation and Who suffered in the punishment that should have been ours.

The Mission program that does not produce a worshipping people is failing to carry out the full scope of the Great Commission. The mission strategy that does not require a worshipping worker who will foster a worshipping community of believers, is out of step with the Father "Who seeks such who will worship in Spirit and in Truth." The mission priorities that relegate a worshipful response only to older mature believers in highly developed churches is robbing new persons in Christ of their greatest privilege and prerogative.

Our objective is not merely to make people better but to invite persons to join us in both the words and life of praise that shall characterize eternity. The practice of that heavenly activity ought to begin now. In this new year let us make it a missionary hymn when we declare, "Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball, to Him all majesty ascribe, and CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL." That's worship!

—RWG





The Wild Coast, Southern Africa



MESSENGER

Volume LI, No. 2 Spring 1984

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

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Photo credits: p.1, 4-9: L. Hills; p.8, middle, J. Bertsche; p.9, left, p.10 Stanley Fretz; p.11, middle, B. Dyck; p.11, bottom, H. Unrau; p.12, courtesy S.A. Mohono; p.13, courtesy R. Derksen. Other Photos and Artwork by AIMM Communications

50 YEARS AGO...

The Board of the Congo Inland Mission, as AIMM was then known, in 1934 consisted of: (Standing from left to right) Emanuel Rocke, Emanuel Slagle, J.P. Barkman, I.R. Detweiler, Albert Neuenschwander, William B. Weaver; (Seated) Noble O. Hoover, H.E. Bertsche, Emanuel Troyer, Allen Yoder, and A.M. Eash.



With three of the men having the name Emanuel, it should have been a reminder that "God is with us" even in those difficult days of the Great Depression.

from album of Frank Enns, 1895-1975

AIMM MESSENGER

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Bob Gerhart
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Jenny Bertsche
Martini Janz
Office Secretary:
Doreen Ratzlaff



*Old Man, Old Tembu Man,
What are thinking? What do you see?
Your people have been here for centuries.
Your land is debated, your tribe separated;
Do you feel hated?*

*Old Man, Old African,
How does it feel to be classified?
Or to be denied? Have your children cried?
Do you understand what others have planned
For you and your clan?*

*Old Man, Old Wise Man,
If I come to teach, will you teach me more,
On your fair hills by the Wild Shore?
What are the things you find most confusing?
How much of life was not your own choosing?*

*Old Man, Dear Old Man,
How long will it be till you feel set free
By the same Chief Jesus that loves you and me?
Are you aware? Has anyone shared
The best Good News that God does care?*

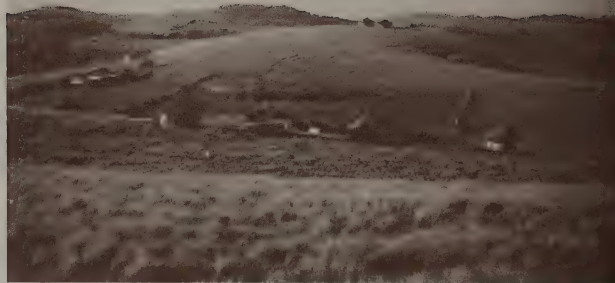
The Tembu are one of the tribal groups living in the area of the Transkei.

—RWG

This is the Transkei is the first of a series of articles designed to provide background information of the fields where AIMM presently serves.

Descriptions of historical developments or political realities do not imply approval by AIMM of policies carried out by governments or peoples in the past or at present. We share these sketches to help our readers grasp something of the context and culture within which AIMM seeks to be obedient to the Great Commission.

THIS IS THE TRANSKEI



Transkei homestead

Rolling emerald green hills sprinkled with white-faced huts, a rugged unspoiled coastline edging the Indian Ocean, vast grasslands indented by deep twisting valleys, and spectacular waterfalls as streams drop toward the sea—this is the Transkei.

The Transkei is part of Southern Africa. It is the historical territory north of the great Kei River, hence its name “Trans Kei” meaning “across the Kei (River).” It reaches to the UmTamvuna River 150 miles north east. Bounded by the Indian Ocean it rises inland to the foothills of the great Drakensberg mountains and Lesotho’s border.

Though incorporated into the Union of South Africa it was never completely occupied by colonial settlers. It remained as home to several tribal groups who speak one of the Nguni-type languages, similar linguistically to the Zulu and Swazi languages farther to the north.

The Transkei is people of at least nine tribal clusters, people who moved toward this southernmost flank of Africa many centuries ago. For the most part they were cattle raisers and found the treeless terrain suitable for large herds. Sheep and goats now prevalent were introduced in more recent times. Family and clan lines were very important as for many African peoples. But instead of clustering in villages most of these people lived in scattered homesteads.

The homestead still consists of clusters of huts with white-washed designs identical on each hut of a particular family. Within the homestead is the cattle kraal, a roofless pen enclosed by low walls. Each hut houses family members related to the patriarchal head of the homestead. A group of homesteads acknowledges in turn the leadership of a headman. Lineage and kinship through the male line is carefully maintained and affects most aspects of daily life and custom.

Main tribal groups today are the Pondo, Pondomise, Tembu, Bomvana and Gcaleka Xhosa. (While all are referred to as “Xhosa-speaking” only the last is properly called a “Xhosa tribe.”) Their distinctive dress varies from one tribe to another. Common to many, however, are long skirts and rather prominent turban-like head coverings of large pieces of materials or blankets. Beadwork is highly developed. Startling to the visitor is the pipe-smoking by both older men and women.

Among the Gcaleka Xhosa earth colors with various shades of red and orange ochre are dominant in the heavy fabrics of their dress. With a temperate climate blankets worn as outer garments are useful.

The Pondo people in the northeastern part of the area prefer a very light blue color in their traditional blankets and dress. Both groups use a great deal of braid as attractive trim on their clothes. Depending on the tribe, either red ochre or white clay is often used cosmetically, sometimes by men as well as women.

Xhosa speaking peoples believed in a Supreme Being long before missionaries arrived in the early 1800’s. But this great God was thought to be totally remote from his creatures and uninterested in them. He was not one that could be approached and generally did not meddle in the affairs of men.



More important to the people were the spirits of the ancestors who could help or harm, give instruction or express displeasure to their living descendants. Regular offerings and ritual sacrifices were made to appease them, especially at a time of family crisis. The head of the homestead was responsible to represent the family in these rituals.

As with many other African tribes, traditionally the most religiously significant person is the "diviner." Traditional belief does not view misfortune as accidental. It is considered caused by either witchcraft or sorcery. A sorcerer or witch uses supernatural occult powers to cause harm or evil. Some are considered to have an alliance with one or more evil spirits. The diviner on the other hand is one who has power to determine who cast the evil spell that caused harm or tragedy. Diviners specialize as well in providing more powerful "medicine" or charms that can protect or even counteract the evil.

Europeans sometimes confused the two when they used the term "witch doctor" for both the sorcerer practicing witchcraft, and the diviner using occult powers to countermand the witch.

In the Transkei diviners often work through seances and professed power to explain reasons for illnesses or misfortune and to interpret the wishes of the ancestors.

Xhosa culture also makes much use of herbalists who dispense natural medicines but do not necessarily resort to the supernatural occult as a diviner does.

Thirty per cent of today's population are considered "tribal religionists," continuing the traditional beliefs strongly influenced by veneration of the ancestors.

Seventy per cent identify themselves as Christian in the broadest sense of that term. About eighty-five per cent of these are actually "practicing," either Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant or in an African indigenous church movement.

Missionaries have been working in the Transkei since Methodist William Shaw arrived in 1827. That first group, the Methodist Church is also the largest today with 600,000 adherents, nearly one-fourth of the population. About forty Protestant denominations are represented in the region. Less than ten per cent are Anglican and under six per cent are Roman Catholic.

The fastest growing groups are Black indigenous groups usually referred to as African Independent Churches (AIC's). More than twenty per cent of the population are in one of the more than two hundred different groups.



Carrying firewood across the hills

The Transkei is potential. It contains some of the better agricultural land with an adequate and fairly dependable rainfall. But agricultural techniques and low turnover of livestock has severely limited production. Instead of realizing its potential as a possible food exporter, much food still needs to be brought in from surrounding areas. Tea plantations are doing well as a cash crop and some coffee is being grown.

Industrial development is getting started. A burlap bag factory, building materials, furniture production and small scale textile industries are underway. A unique "industry" is the large assembly of fly fishing lures exported throughout the angling world.

Currently more than a hundred industries of various sizes provide 100,000 jobs. Key centers of Umtata and Butterworth are linked by rail lines and highways with the South African harbor of East London to the south.

It is estimated that the Transkei contains more than twenty per cent of Southern Africa's water supply. Already twenty sizeable dams on its many rivers make possible irrigation of twenty square miles of agricultural land.

An ambitious twenty-five year plan of reforestation is underway with a goal of planting trees on an additional thirty square miles each year.

continued on next page

But the Transkei is problems, too. Serious problems have resulted from its being part of the larger southern African mix of racial and ethnic identities. Multiplicity of languages and dialects and unequal access to wealth and power add to the complexity. In 1963 the Transkei became the first of the black self-governing states within South Africa based on the tribal "national" identity. The black African peoples were collectively called "Bantu," an African word meaning "people." When given tribes were assigned to a territory by South Africa's white central government the territories took on a reservation-type limitation and were described by critics as "Bantustans." South African policy of legalized separation of racial groups was called by the Dutch word for separateness, "apartheid." While this term is no longer used by policy makers, the more current terminology of "separate development" or "plural democracies" continues to draw vigorous criticism both within and from beyond South Africa's borders as racially discriminating and unjust. Policy makers defend the division of South African territory along tribal lines as being necessary because of ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences to ensure stability and the "freedom" for each of the tribal groups to be self-governing in a territory of its own. Hence the term "homeland" refers to territory which is considered the home for persons of a particular tribe.

In many cases, though not all, these were traditional lands of those respective peoples. Present government policy intends that as many of these as possible develop from initial "self-governing states" to "independent nations" in their own right. Critics of the policy of separate development challenge the viability of such small enclaves though it is admitted there are many smaller entities which are already members of the United Nations.

Independent Church leader



top: Whitewashed rondavels; bottom: Transkei Airways, Umtata

The Transkei found itself in the center of these policy disputes both in South African and world forums when it first accepted self-government as a homeland in 1963 and even more when it opted for "independence" from South Africa in 1976.

No one argues that economic interdependence is very much a reality. What is debated, often heatedly, is whether the existence of the "Republic of Transkei" as an "independent nation" should be granted recognition, combatted, boycotted or simply ignored. Nearly eight years after the October, 1976 ceremonies the political and identity questions remain.

Were it a matter of a new status for the population that has always resided in the region called The Transkei the debate would have taken a different form. The tragedy added, however, was the South African government's policy which considers all persons with a Xhosa ethnic identity automatically citizens of the homeland whether they have ever lived there or not. Whatever previous South African citizenship status they may have held prior to October, 1976, Xhosa-speaking persons living in other parts of South Africa found themselves required to be citizens of a new "state" that most of the world refused to recognize.



Xhosa boys on the beach

Added to the situation were factors of overpopulation, over-grazing, limited employment opportunities and the conflict of organized change versus rural traditionalism. Families were uprooted, communities expected to move and new loyalties were to develop by persons outside the Transkei region simply on the basis of ethnic and tribal ties imposed by legislation rather than by free choice.

The reality of nearly three million people in a troubled region of the African continent cannot be denied. It is the human and spiritual needs of these people that prompted a Christian response among concerned Mennonite persons. Both AIMM and MCC have sought ways to relate in a meaningful way to persons caught in a complex situation.

As Christian workers who believe human dignity is based on being created in the image of God, they are deeply concerned about basic fundamental rights for all. Since all persons are the objects of God's love, an imposed separateness or an ideology based on racial superiorities is contrary to the clear principles of Scripture.

AIMM joins other Christians who also believe that because of this very value God places on persons, regardless of where they live, one cannot wait until political solutions are found before attempting to meet physical and spiritual needs. AIMM brings the conviction that the witness of the Gospel and correct application of Scripture can transform situations that appear hopeless to men.

The greatest prospect in this green corner of the continent is still its people. With a long history of a Christian presence and a great early tradition of Christian education the Transkei has potential as a significant resource of Christian leadership. Some of the first training schools for black Africa were established here early in the Nineteenth Century. Key leaders for church and society at large were trained here in former generations.

However, with present economic restraints overshadowed by political uncertainties many seem too preoccupied to focus on Christian leadership training. Congregations are lacking well-trained leadership. Divisions and nominalism plague the Christian community as elsewhere in Africa. Maintaining institutional structures consumes energy that should be used in outreach and discipleship. And one finds the additional questions posed by the many African indigenous church groups. In fact, one could say the AIC movement began in the Transkei. It was just a century ago, in 1884, that Nehemiah Tile left the Wesleyan Church and formed the Tembu National Church, considered to be the first of the separatist groups. Today they are collectively called African Independent Churches and they number in the thousands in Southern Africa.

These groups prompted the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission to place its first worker in the Transkei in September, 1982. Bible teaching ministries have been established to help key leaders in these growing groups to be well grounded in the Scriptures. AIMM's objective is not to change these churches into western type denominations conforming to a missionary's culture. Rather it is the conviction of AIMM that the Scriptures are transcultural and can provide a trustworthy guide and corrective where needed, to persons within their own cultures and settings. Where practices have developed that are contrary to the intent of the Scriptures it is the authority of the Word that will prompt change, not the imposed authority of the missionary or outside organization. In the meantime the mission worker seeks to develop a relationship with the AIC churches, learning and loving as he shares his understanding of the Scripture truths. In his availability to sit with them, to study and worship with them, the applications of that Word to their world will become clear in due time.

—Compiled by Bob Gerhart



TERRITORIAL PROFILE:

AREA: 16,675 sq. mi.; 43,190 sq. km.

POPULATION: 2,305,000 (1976), including approx. 350,000 absent migrant laborers
Pop. Density: 129/sq. mi.; 50/sq. km.

GROWTH RATE: 1975 to 1980 was 6.5% including 3.5% by immigration

EDUCATION: School Pop.: 30%; Adult Literacy: 40%

GOVERNMENT: Official Name of territorial government: The Republic of Transkei
Head of State: Paramount Chief Kaiser Daliwong Matanzima, b. 1915
Form: Parliamentary Republic; National Assembly of 150 seats, 75 elected and 75 chiefs

URBAN CENTERS: Umtata: 30,000; Butterworth: 20,000

TRANSPORTATION: 5400 miles of roads; Railroads connect Umtata to East London via Butterworth while Matatiele and Kokstad connect to the north through Umzimkulu

RELIGION: Of the more than 1.5 million affiliated with a Christian group, 33% are Evangelical, 40% are African Indigenous, and 8% are Roman Catholic
30% of population are traditional tribal religionists.

ECONOMY: Per Capita Income: \$262 (1979)



CONTACT

Spring 1984

staying in touch with the AIMM Family

Board Happenings

spring meeting

In spite of a surprise spring snowfall causing some delays for travellers more than thirty-five persons gathered for the AIMM Board meeting at the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, March 23-25.

Highlights of the weekend were the participation of staff, board and missionaries in the morning Sunday Schools and Worship Services of the area churches; a lesson in language analysis with Dan and Kathy Petersen; and a review by Jim and Vicki Egli of their time in Lesotho.

The climax of the weekend was the Sunday evening rally at the Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church. Missionary appointees Harris Waltner, Steve Nelson, and Evelyn Riediger gave brief testimonies. Jim and Vicki Egli were interviewed by "Jed" the puppet with Bob Gerhart; Jim Bertsche provided a "Capsule of AIMM" and the multi-media presentation "Understanding Lesotho" had its premier showing. Approximately 300 people from the area churches gathered for this service.

Agenda items for the Board included the new AIMM handbook, interviewing and appointing seven new missionaries, financial review and the approval of a provision for a partnership with self-supporting workers.

The new AIMM handbook incorporates policies, guidelines and procedures for mission personnel. The product of many hours by executive staff of AIMM, the handbook brings together philosophy of mission and principles for cross-cultural communications in everyday missionary life. The handbook received approval as a working document and is now available for missionary personnel.

Housing and meals for the guests was arranged in area homes and churches by a United Mennonite Church committee.

Re-elected to the executive were Chairman, Andrew Rupp, Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Vice Chairman, Peter G. Sawatzky, Waterloo, Ontario; and Secretary, Erwin Rempel, Newton, Kansas.

New Responsibilities...

-Ron Sawatzky will be the Maths Lecturer at a new Teacher Training College opening at Molepolole, Botswana in September. Ron has been at the University of Botswana.

-Pete Buller (Zaire) was asked to be Acting Director of ISTK, the theological college where he has served on faculty. Pray for a new president for ISTK.

Disappointment...

After months of preparation and weeks of rehearsing the Zaire Mennonite Men's Choir was unable to visit Europe and the Mennonite World Conference due to visa problems for Zaire citizens. Three representatives of the Mennonite Communities were granted visas. They were Rev. Mbonza, CMZA President, Rev. Mukanza, CMZA Vice-President, and Rev. Kilabi of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.

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ON THE AIR...

AIMM was featured on two episodes of the Great Commission Radio Program broadcast April 4 and 28 in the Fort Wayne area.

Daryl Cartmel, host for the program interviewed Bob Gerhart for the two 15-minute segments. The first program focused on AIMM's ministry among the international community in Maseru, Lesotho, where the Gerharts served. The second program dealt with AIMM's approach to working with the African Independent Churches in Southern Africa.

Earlier programs included interviews with Steve and Pat Nelson, FWBC students who were recently appointed by AIMM for service in Zaire.

The Great Commission program is produced by the Missions Department of Ft. Wayne Bible College and is heard over the college's radio station WBCL, Ft. Wayne.



CONTACT

staying in touch with AFRICA



Launched...

FIRST OFFICIAL ORIENTATION

AIMM held its first official orientation March 27-28, 1984. The sessions were conducted at the 1711 Center in Elkhart.

AIMM staff planned and participated in the orientation. The day and a half sessions included a review of the history, policies & guidelines of AIMM; financial policies; communications to supporting constituencies & home churches as well as the mechanics of acquiring passports, visas, and inoculations.

The orientation at Elkhart will be a continuing requirement for new workers with AIMM.



Welcome...

FIRST "PIM's"

AIMM's first "Partners In Mission" are John and Madonna Yoder. They, and their three children, Rodney, Karla and Daryl arrived in Gaborone, Botswana on July 8. John is under contract with the University of Botswana.

"Partners In Mission" is a new category which provides self-supporting workers with a fraternal tie to the AIMM Board in North America and the mission team in the country. We welcome the Yoders to the AIMM "family."

Shalom!

We call it leuba. Three syllables pronounced la-oo-ba. And it means drought - drought that is slowly but ever so surely wringing the life out of this land. For three years our farmers have planted good seed and harvested only parched ears. For us it is a growing and disturbing acquaintance with a creeping, intractable calamity.

Perhaps the most wrenching sight of all is the animal carcasses strewn across the shallow pans that are normally full of water at this time of year - carcasses of cattle that have finally dropped of thirst, their hides slowly shrinking around the skeletal remains and lying in the bright, remorseless sunlight.

While we are troubled by the inconvenience of flushing less often than we'd like and by watching our yard turn a burnt sienna, over the western horizon are the villages and desert tribes who for centuries lived a life of amazing resourcefulness hunting, gathering and herding their cattle. For them the drought is a matter of daily desperation. Stories are heard of small bewildered bands wandering along desert trails in search of water, the thirst of mothers and young children relieved only by the rinds of the bitter desert melons clenched in their parched mouths.

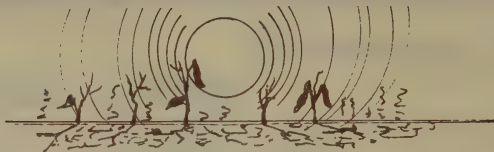
I was stunned at a pastors' seminar in the bush late last year to see an elderly man drop in full stride, collapsed from weakness and hunger while following his herd of cattle.

Daily we are growing accustomed to the small signs of the drought. The birds, all except the sturdy little sparrows, have gone. The weavers and even the brilliant sunbirds have had enough. And when we wake we are greeted daily by the little ants that nightly drown themselves in our tea kettle having left their colonies deep underground in search of water.

But even in this drought we see signs of resilience and hope. The accacia, marvelously equipped to live in thirsty places, keep their thorny composure while generating massive quantities of seed pods as though to promise better days. And the only remaining swatch of green in our backyard orchard is a plucky mulberry.

Public prayers for rain are now a weekly occurrence. It is said about the cooking fires at night and wherever people gather to cluck their tongues and commiserate that this is a visitation of God upon a wayward nation. Meanwhile we try to avoid casting hopeful glances skyward since local lore avers that those who look for clouds only prolong the drought.

-Jonathan Larson, Botswana



from missionaries' letters

In Your Praying...

Requests...

Botswana:

Rain for this drought-parched land.
More personnel in at least two assignments.

Lesotho:

Work among AIC's: teaching of classes, planning for six week-end conferences in 1984; a new class of 16 in the Mafeteng community.

Transkei:

More personnel to become available to assist in work with the AIC's.

Upper Volta:

The tiny group of new believers at Kotoura: Ceba and others. Wisdom for the team as they must decide in which language area to place new workers.

Zaire:

Continuing economic problems discourage and depress workers and nationals.

There will be much AIMM missionary/staff travelling during the summer months. Pray for safety and good flight connections.

Missionaries in language studies in France, Belgium and Lesotho.

New appointees leaving during the summer months.

Jim and Jenny Bertsche, Erwin and Angela Rempel on an administrative/orientation tour of all five fields.

Seriously ill:

Cornelius Frantz, husband of Selma Unruh Frantz. Selma was a worker in Zaire from 1946-1964.

Thanksgivings...

Thanksgiving for Dan Petersen's recovery from the lung infection which brought them back to the U.S.

Thanks for additional housing being available for mission personnel at Kananga.

Thanksgiving for recoveries from recent surgeries:

Glenn Rocke, Zaire

Arlo Raid, Iowa, former VS worker in Zaire

Fannie Schmallerberger, Illinois, retired from Zaire

Buddy Dyck, Botswana



Mechanic
on the way

ANSWER TO PRAYER!!!

Maurice and Joyce Briggs, Peter (11) and Katherine (8), are the newest members of the AIMM family. They are from Coulee City, Washington and will be leaving for language study in France in September. The Briggs will join the team in Kalonda, Zaire, where Maurice will work in the Kalonda Garage and Transport Department.

Maurice has a wide range of mechanical background and experience which equip him well for the position at Kalonda. Joyce has worked as a teacher's aide, a clerk-accountant and was most recently the branch librarian at Coulee City Library.

Another person, or couple, is still needed for the Kalonda Garage work, so keep praying!

Makina Family Arrives

Kasanji, wife of Dr. Makina a Nganga, and two children, arrived in New Orleans, June 7. She has come to be with her husband as he completes work toward a Master in Public Health at Tulane University.

Dr. Makina is under scholarship from USAID. They will return to Zaire sometime next year when Dr. Makina will assume responsibilities as director-administrator of the public health program for the CMZ.

comings & goings

✂ Leaving North America:

MISSIONARIES ON THE MOVE:

Steve & Pat Nelson to Zaire
 Dan & Kathy Petersen to Upper Volta
 Evelyn Riediger to France
 Dennis & Dianne Schmidt to Zaire
 Harris & Christine Waltner to Lesotho

✂ To North America:

John & Tina Bohn
 Henry & Tina Dirks
 Peter & Annie Falk
 Arnold & Grace Harder
 Jonathan & Mary Kay Larson
 Anna V. Liechty
 Margie Neuenschwander
 Dennis & Jeanne Rempel
 Ron Sawatzky
 Gail Wiebe

✂ From language study -

To Upper Volta:

Paul & Lois Thiessen

To Zaire:

Glenn & Phyllis Boese
 Gordon & Jarna Claassen
 Sandra Friesen
 Gary & Maureen Groot

New Arrivals

BIRTHS:

✧ Ryan Andrew to Dennis & Dianne Schmidt, Feb. 22.

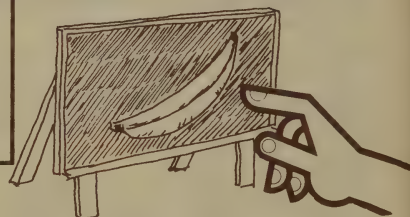
✧ Joy Ramona, to Dan & Kathy Petersen, May 25.

✧ Timothy Luke, to Jim and Linda Yoder, July 24.

Irvin Friesen writes:

Encouraging

"The Lord has let in two more sunrays to cheer us up. A young man came to us saying that someone had told him we teach Bible. Since there were many Christians in Botswana he thought Christianity might be a good religion to pursue. We had to start with zero with him. He has accepted the Lord and is beginning to grow. The second joy is that a local pastor came to us for help. I began questioning him about God and the basics of the Christian faith. His answers were clear and his experience with the Lord seemed to be genuine. He has been returning for further counseling. This makes three people we are instructing personally at our home. In addition, I have 62 students registered in classes, representing 26 different churches from 22 denominations."



A Merry Heart

Doeth Good...

GRIN A BIT..

from Fanny Schmallenberger

▷ You can't really take it easy unless there is something you should be doing.

▷ Some people get into debt just to keep up with the people who are.

▷ A speech is like a wheel. The longer the spoke, the greater the tire.

"I WANT A BANANA..."

Using this simple sentence, Dan and Kathy Petersen gave the AIMM Board and observers a seriously humorous lesson in basic language analysis. Through the process of changing one simple word or sound at a time they showed how time-consuming, frustrating and discouraging language analysis may be. At the same time they also shared the joy and excitement of discovery in language as words and phrases begin to make sense. Petersens talked about the "drum language," the language of tone and sound which may remove vowels and consonants and still "speak." Through all the process there is still always the "residue," the unknown in any language which is just there but it's difficult to know why and which keeps analysts from getting clear sentence structure. Thanks to this lesson we realize that language analysis is more than putting on paper the words and sentences of a new language.



Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
 224 West High Street
 Elkhart, Indiana 46516

prepared by AIMM Communications

Larry Hills, AIMM's first missionary in the Transkei, teaches Bible among the African Independent Churches. He is now living with a Xhosa-speaking family in the village of Misty Mount.

Sharing in Hope

Excerpts of letters from Larry Hills:

"When I boarded the plane at JFK, I had more than a few fears and questions about what lay ahead of me. Those fears and questions have been put to rest by the quality of the life which I have experienced. It is a life which has been filled with great joy and many rewards. It is here in Transkei that I have experienced the Lord's presence and care in ways that I have not known before. I have sensed the Lord's presence through the Independent Churches. I have been humbled and moved by the ways in which I have been welcomed, accepted, cared for and loved by Independent Church people.

Despite the frailties of the AIC's I have come to see them as a cause for great hope in this all too often hopeless land. The hope that one finds there is not a hope based revolution and the will to seize political power, it is rather a hope that rests on Jesus Christ Who brings healing in the midst of sickness, light in the midst of darkness, love in the midst of hatred and fear, and freedom in the midst of oppression. I think that the AIC's have much to teach the other churches in Southern Africa about what it means to live as a new and renewing community under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.



Participants at conference at Silowa

"I have also sensed the Lord's presence through this incredible land. The countryside is becoming a kaleidoscope of lush greens accompanied by the brilliant reds, blues, purples and yellows of the wild flowers. The rains have also brought a burst of activity on the farms as plowing and planting move into high gear. After months of very little grass, the goats, cattle and sheep are beginning to look well-fed and healthy."

In the late 1800's a coloured man from the Cape named Will Jordan led a group of Afrikaners on one of their many treks across South Africa. As they traveled Jordan wrote in his journal: "The land itself has claimed me. I was bound to its vastness, its poetry, I had grown in it and it had grown in me." As I look out the window the jacaranda trees are filling the air with clouds of purple, the spring rains have turned the hills a velvet green, the clouds are scraping the tops of the forested mountains at the horizon, on the distant hilltops I can see villages where I have eaten, prayed, sung, danced, taught and where one day I will be living. I think I know what Will Jordan was talking about when he said that he had been claimed by the land and bound to its poetry.

continued on next page

Larry Hills at his house dedication, Misty Mount

AIC Bible Conference



Of course, there have been all of the usual discouragements, misunderstandings and aggravations which occur when two very different cultures meet in their human representatives. But the over-riding experience has been one of joy. The people with whom I am working have been very open, warm and accepting towards me. I feel that we are developing the foundation for good working relationships in the future.

One of the Zionist bishops became interested in my wish to live in a rural area with an African family. At first he could not believe that such a thing could ever be legal. He has spent his life living under the Group Areas Act. And the notion of whites and blacks living together seemed strange to him. But he was sufficiently intrigued by the idea to want to pursue it with the authorities. He checked first with the government where he was told that those laws are no longer in effect in the Transkei; that was followed by a meeting with the chief and the district magistrate, both of whom gave their blessing to the idea. Under the leadership of Bishop Mphahla, his church decided to work together to build a house where I could live. This house is located with the Mphahla family compound. And, except for the window and the door, is being constructed entirely with materials gathered from the bishop's land with the labor supplied by the church people.

Bible teaching activity is concentrated on four areas: quarterly week-end conference, weekly classes, one-day conferences and informal opportunities. Week-end conferences continue to be very popular with the people. Not the least of the reasons for the popularity is that they provide an opportunity for people who are separated geographically to get together for fellowship and to discuss mutual concerns. Weekly classes have been held in three different village locations. Earlier I conducted a class on the Parables of Jesus, I have completed a class on Genesis 1-11 and I am now beginning a class entitled "The Kingdom of God." These weekly classes provide for regular on-going contact with AIC people as well as providing an opportunity to teach in greater depth than in the less frequent conferences. One-day conferences have been held in the areas which are too distant to permit weekly contact. During the past year I have conducted three of these meetings in Southern Transkei. They have been well received by the people. Informal opportunities consist of funerals, worship services, feasts, all-night services and baptisms which provide opportunities for teaching as well as opportunities for participating in the life of the Independent Churches.



Larry with village chief

As an out-growth of my Bible teaching activity I have also produced small study booklets for the Parables, Genesis 1-11 and the Book of Acts. We have also translated a series of children's books in Xhosa. The translations were done by AIC people and then produced in our office. I am hoping to use the conferences in the future to begin to address specific areas of concern which are at the week-end conferences are "The Role of the Prophet in the Bible and in the Independent Churches," "The Place of the Ancestor Spirit in the Church Today," "The Problem of Church Splits in Independent Churches."

I began to provide various Christian books for sale at the Bible conferences. I have sold well over 500 items consisting of Bibles, commentaries, Bible study materials, devotional books, song books and children's books.

My work and relationships with the Independent Churches constitute the most rewarding thing I have ever done. As I reflect on the past months, I would characterize my relationship with the church leaders as one of a growing sense of mutual trust. The bishops are becoming more and more open in sharing their needs and the needs of their churches. I find that I am also opening up more of my life to the people of the Independent Churches. So I see the bonds of openness and trust becoming stronger among us as we seek to understand God's Word and to discern His will for our life together in the Transkei.



Worship among African Spiritual Churches is not confined to formal church sanctuaries. Nor does the congregation function as mere spectators. AIMM missionary, Jonathan Larson captures something of the spirit of celebration as an African congregation gathers around the cross in pre-Easter worship in Botswana.



Mahalapye, Botswana

Lenten Vision

AIC leaders, Botswana



The preachers came and went,
But more powerful still
Than the sum of sermons:
The silent standard of a cross
Held aloft by a stream of nameless faithful.

Then
Word erupted in vision
Like a bursting dike;
The uniformed throng,
A chanting tide
Rising, falling,
Flowing in glistening cadence,
Surging in joyous eddies
About that standard,
Bearing gifts in gladness
Beneath its silent sheen.

Guests we were;
Guests of a vision:
A Passover people,
All dancing exuberance
Neath a Lenten cross.

JPL

Expressions of praise



S.A. Mohono (left) on Day of Ordination

ORDAINED!

Two unique ordinations took place in Africa during the past year. A missionary in Zaire and a key lay leader in southern Africa were ordained for roles in Christian leadership.

In the southern part of the continent in the country of Lesotho a significant leader among the African Independent Churches was ordained in a joyful celebration earlier this year. Samuel A. Mohono has provided outstanding leadership though always from a layman's position. As a former worker for the Johannesburg Sunday School Association and then as the General Secretary of the Lesotho Bible Society, Mr. Mohono has worked closely with churches of many denominations and in recent years with AIMM. More recently he has provided much of the impetus for strengthening the Federal Council of African Spiritual Churches, an organization begun a half a century ago by his father, the late Reverend Raymond Mohono. But it wasn't until February 1984 that Samuel Mohono now in his early 60's was ordained a pastor himself. The service took place shortly before his departure from Lesotho for Nairobi, Kenya, where he will assume responsibility as the first General Secretary of the Organization of African Independent Churches.

Concerning the Lesotho ordination Reverend Mohono reports, "Friday prior to the main service was a day of fasting and prayer for the Nazarites which ended at twelve o'clock midnight. About the same time the Botswana contingent of fifty-three people arrived including Archbishop Israel Motswasele. Many people from the Orange Free State in the Republic of South Africa arrived on Saturday morning and throughout the day. Among them were included the Reverend Paul Makhubu and Doctor Lydia August representing the OAIC. Representatives from the Lesotho mountain areas included the Bishop S.C. Monathi, former president of the Africa Federal Church Council.

"The program for the next day was worked out to be fully ecumenical therefore the ordinary Sunday service was held on Saturday at 4:00 p.m. At 8:00 p.m. the night vigil service started. Most people went to the night service so we were able to accommodate those who wished to sleep for the night. By six o'clock on Sunday morning everybody was up to get ready for the 8:00 a.m. service. We started with the main service of the ordination and ended with speeches. Seen and unseen miracles took place. It was a service of tears throughout. Towards the end of the service rain started pouring though we are experiencing a time of drought. As part of our thanksgiving to the Lord we slaughtered two cows, two sheep and seventeen chickens for the feast. The church bought most of the groceries to feed the more than 2000 that made up the congregation attending the service."



Samuel and Emily Mohono during Ordination Service

Richard Derksen, second term AIMM missionary in Zaire, was one of four ordained to the pastoral ministry in a service at Kalonda last June. Rick was invited by the church to provide leadership in the Department of Evangelism. In this role which gave him responsibilities relating to many ordained pastors it was deemed wise by the Zaire churches that he himself be an ordained person. As he explains, his decision to accept such a call was not hastily or easily made.

Richard and Marilyn Derksen during Ordination Service



Rick Derksen, in reflecting on his new role, wrote,

"I want to share a few reflections on my ordination. I never had any desire to be ordained as a minister. In fact, I wanted to avoid it even after one term in Zaire and seminary studies. I am not fully aware of all of the reasons for this feeling but I think it was due partly to my image of a minister or pastor: 'someone who had all of the necessary gifts including that of preaching which I never felt I had; someone who had resolved all of the difficult questions regarding faith and belief; and someone who had lived a more or less holy life.' Of course this image changed as I came to know pastors as friends and colleagues.

"While working in Zaire my desire to avoid ordination was also partly due to the image of the Christian minister in this society. Ordination brings status, prestige, authority and access to privilege to such an extent that it is sometimes eagerly sought. Church members often expect pastors to carry out most if not all of the responsibilities in the work of the church. On the one hand pastors often complain that members do not help them. On the other hand sometimes members want to participate but some pastors hesitate to share tasks with them for various reasons. Consequently there is a sense of class consciousness in the church. In light of this situation which is probably not unique to Zaire, I preferred to work as an unordained person even in what are considered pastoral roles.

"When we returned to Zaire in the summer of 1982, however, the leaders of the CMZ asked me to take a position involving the supervision of pastors among other things and suggested that I be ordained as a pastor myself. Other pastors and church members encouraged me to be ordained so I began to think seriously about the possibility. I realized that I had developed certain gifts including that of preaching in Tshiluba and was in many ways already in the role of a pastor. I had not resolved all of the questions on faith and belief which confronted me particularly as a North American Christian living and working in this society and this culture but I knew that being an ordained minister did not mean having the answers to all of life's questions. I was, and still am, far from being holy but trusted that God would continue to perfect me and so I accepted ordination as a confirmation of God's call through the church and a step of faith taken with the church here as we seek to participate in God's liberating mission.

"I was ordained on the twenty-sixth of June 1983 along with three others, Reverend Bukasa Nkongolo, Reverend Kabasele Bantubiabo (the TEE Director), and Reverend Thau Mbumba. A fifth pastor, Reverend Tshimpanga Zukusa, was reinstated as a pastor after several years under church discipline. The ordination service was held in the Kalonda chapel with about a thousand people in attendance. It lasted nearly five hours. Following the service there was a celebration feast to which each ordained person had invited a certain number of guests. Ours was one of eight ordination services in 1983 in which nineteen people were ordained in the CMZ bringing the total number of pastors to about 125. Of those ordained in 1983 ten were Bible Institute graduates, six were ISTK graduates, and two had taken special courses in Kananga."

Rick and Tshimowa Bisosa singing a prayer



An AIMM Directory

The AIMM family as of July 1984

**will be on short furlough, Summer 1984*



BOTSWANA...

Gaborone

Fremont and Sara Regier
Ron Sawatzky*
P.O. Box 33
Gaborone, Botswana

Jonathan and Mary Kay Larson
Henry and Naomi Unrau
P.O. Box 703
Gaborone, Botswana

Selebi-Pikwe

Irvin and Lydia Friesen
P.O. Box 469
Selebi-Pikwe, Botswana

Francistown

B. Harry and Lois Dyck
P.O. Box 669
Francistown, Botswana

THE TRANSKEI...

Misty Mount

Larry Hills
P.O. Box 65
Umtata, Transkei 5100
South Africa

LESOTHO...

Maseru

Harlan and Claire deBrun
P.O. Box 1331
Maseru 100, Lesotho

Harris and Christine Waltner
P.O. Box 365
Maseru 100, Lesotho

UPPER VOLTA...

Orodara

Loren and Donna Entz
Dennis and Jeanne Rempel
Dan and Kathy Petersen
Paul and Lois Thiessen
B.P. 40
Orodara, Upper Volta

Kotoura

Anne Garber
Gail Wiebe
Kotoura
S/P de Koloko
Upper Volta

ZAIRE... EITHER: B.P. 4081 Kinshasa II Republic of Zaire

Kinshasa

OR: B.P. 16585
Kinshasa
Republic of Zaire

David Bergen
Peter and Gladys Buller
Peter and Annie Falk*
Nancy Graber
Earl and Ruth Roth
Jim and Linda Yoder

Kalonda

Jim and Jeanette Christensen
Gordon and Jarna Claassen
Donna Colbert
Rick and Marilyn Derksen
Mary Epp
Sandra Friesen
Gary and Maureen Groot
Glenn and Ina Rocke

Kananga

Henry and Tina Dirks*
Don and Norma Friesen
Dennis and Dianne Schmidt

Kikwit

Glen and Phyllis Boese
Don and Naomi Unruh

Nyanga

Kathy Fountain
Elda Hiebert
Arnold and Grace Harder*

Tshikaji

Marjorie Neuenschwander*

Tshikapa

Herman and Ruth Buller
Leona Schrag



AIMM works in five areas on the African continent. A variety of ministries blend as eighty North American missionaries work in partnership with African Christians in obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord.

APPOINTED

Maurice and Joyce Briggs, *to Zaire*
Steve and Pat Nelson, *to Zaire*
Evelyn Riediger, *to Upper Volta*
Steve and Judy Harder, *assignment pending*

ON FURLOUGH

from Lesotho
John and Tina Bohn (July to November)

COMPLETING SERVICE

Jim and Cheryl Campbell (*Zaire*)
Richard and Jeanne Hirschler (*Zaire*)
Virgil and Mary Kay Gerig (*Lesotho*)
Titus and Karen Guenther (*Lesotho*)
Anna V. Liechty (*Zaire*)
Dennis and Shirley Ries (*Zaire*)
Sue Wagler (*Zaire*)

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
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GOD, The Transplanter

EDITORIAL



God is a gardener. He's been gardening all along. Some of his plots are now in Africa and some in North America. In fact, He has scattered His planting across this planet. AIMM is part of His planting.

With God gardening is more than a hobby. He is serious about a harvest. He won't grow weary in mid-season. He desires fruit that will last.

As many a lesser gardener has discovered, God knows the importance of transplanting. For many types of plants there is great value in being transplanted. Some may benefit from several replantings. While a sheltered seed bed is ideal for starting growth, strength, productivity and maturity are fostered by transplanting. The protection of confinement in a starting tray will stifle growth unless a replanting takes place.

Surely transplanting is a shock to the plant. It's not natural to be moved from the familiar and placed in a strange and often hostile environment. But it is beneficial for growth. It makes survival itself possible if greater difficulties should come.

God, the careful gardener, doesn't mishandle His plants. It is fruitfulness, not fearfulness or frustration that He desires for them. Why, then, should we resist His transplanting from the comfortable surroundings of home if He has a place for us in another area of His garden? To insist on staying where we have already put down roots may mean a stunted existence.

Of course, not all will be moved from where they were planted. God grows quite a variety of plants for different purposes. The beans are not inferior to the broccoli nor the potatoes to the tomatoes. But if He designed you for productivity through being transplanted, how important it is to yield to the gardener's great wisdom and gentle hand.

The difficulties you now face may be the hardening process important before being replanted. Or the warm showers of present blessings just may be His way of preparing you for a new location. Which ever method God has chosen to use in your life, let Him have His way. He knows what he's growing.



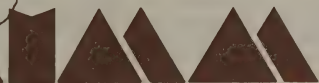
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Casper College, Casper, Wyoming

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Surgery at Kalonda hospital, Zaire



MESSENGER

Volume LI, No. 3 Summer 1984

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.



Mennonite church building at Kalonda

Anna V. Liechty retired for the second time in July 1984 after many years of faithful service in Zaire. She first went to Zaire, when it was the Belgian Congo, in 1946, beginning her ministry at Djoko-Punda. Since 1973 she served on the faculty of the Bible Institute at Kalonda. After retiring in 1981 she returned to the Bible Institute in 1982 for an additional twenty-six months. Her "Psalm of Praise" was written as part of a missionary Bible study with colleagues at Kalonda. She has also translated it into French.

in this issue —

- PAGE 3: WITH COMPASSION by Dennis Ries
 PAGE 6: FELLOW CITIZENS by Dennis & Dianne Schmidt
 PAGE 8: COUNTRY PROFILE Zaire
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 PAGE 12: ...BUT IT WAS FUN by Sue Wagler's Students
 PAGE 14: GOING & GOING BACK
 PAGE 16: IF ONLY...Editorial

p.3 Dr. Dennis Ries of Freeman, South Dakota, recently completed eight years of service at Kalonda where he served as Medical Director as well as Missionary Counselor among the AIMM family. Dr. Ries has been succeeded by Dr. Keta Binza as General Medical Director.

p.6 Dennis and Dianne Schmidt returned to Kananga in August for their second term. They will be relating to the local Mennonite congregations and assisting with youth ministries.

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 A. Harder, p.11,top; Other photos, maps and artwork, B. Gerhart

Psalm of Life

O Lord our God, we praise Thee now
 That Thou alone are truly God,
 Creator and Sustainer, too,
 Of us and all the universe.

We praise Thee, too, for Who Thou art:
 Eternal Spirit personal
 One God existing always as
 The Father, Son and Spirit pure.

We praise Thee, for Thy attributes:
 Eternity, omnipresence,
 Omniscience and omnipotence,
 Immutability and love,
 Compassion, grace and mercy, too;
 In spite of justice infinite,
 And righteousness and holiness,
 Fidelity and truthfulness.

We thank Thee for Thy Holy Word
 Which tells us what we need to know
 About Thyself and Jesus Christ,
 Thy Son from all eternity.
 We thank Thee that He man became
 To die for us, but rose again;
 And that He intercedes for us
 While He prepares for us a place.

We thank Thee that the Spirit came
 To dwell in all real Christians
 To bear in us His ninefold fruit,
 And guide our work of witnessing.

We thank Thee for the Church of Christ,
 And for the blessed hope she has
 Of seeing Christ, her Groom, return
 To claim her as His holy Bride.
 We thank Thee for the hope we have
 Of being with Thee and Thy Son
 Throughout eternal years to come
 In perfect joy and blissfulness.

We pray that Thou wilt pardon us
 For sins we still commit sometimes;
 We also pray, help us to yield
 Ourselves and all we are and have
 To Thee, our God, so Thou canst fill
 Our hearts with love and strength divine,
 So we can be what we should be,
 And do all that we ought to do.

—Anna V. Liechty

AIMM MESSENGER

Editor, Robert W. Gerhart.

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WITH COMPASSION

One may joke about how slowly things change in Zaire but today's Medical Service of the Mennonite Church in Zaire (CMZ) seems to be an exception. In fact, it is difficult to keep up with the changes and expansion.

Organization-----

The Medical Service is a subdepartment of the Social Service Department of the Mennonite Church of Zaire (CMZ). The Administrative Council and the General Assembly of the CMZ are its final authorities. The staff of the central medical office at Kalonda near Tshikapa execute medical council decisions and daily administrative tasks. This staff is comprised of the General Medical Director, Dr. Keta Binza; Medical Administrator, Kamba Nzamba; Medical Director of Community Health, Dr. Richard Hirschler; and Personnel Director, Ibutsi Kafumbe. Each local health center or clinic is directed by a local medical committee.

Each health center is financially self-supporting by means of patient fees adequate to pay salaries and buy replacement medicines. The medicines and supplies are usually purchased from the Central Pharmacy at Kalonda. The Kalonda Pharmacy obtains its supply for all the health centers both in Kinshasa and overseas.

Facilities-----

Three levels of health care facilities exist at present: reference hospitals, reference health centers, and primary health centers. The reference hospitals are at Kalonda, in the Kasai Province, and Mukedi in Bandundu Province. They provide all normal surgical, medical and maternity care under physicians' direction. Kalonda has capability for biochemical laboratory analysis and general anesthesia and already has an X-ray machine. Mukedi is awaiting an X-ray machine which is enroute. Kalonda with about one-hundred beds is staffed by four physicians. Mukedi with sixty beds has two doctors.

A second level of health care consists of seven reference health centers. These facilities are of durable or semi-durable construction and include an operating room and maternity. These are staffed by seven to ten persons including a nurse trained to do basic and emergency surgery.



Mutumbo, village health auxiliary, weighing healthy baby in village of Mbau

The primary level of care is provided by approximately forty primary health centers. Each is expected to provide basic integrated health care for a defined population of not more than ten thousand in a radius of less than seven miles. A typical health center team consists of a nurse, an aid, a midwife, and a community health auxiliary. The staff of three or four persons at the primary health center is to promote village sanitation and personal hygiene, provide preventative health care in the surrounding villages, and give curative care at the health center. Thus they conduct prenatal, family planning, and under age five clinics and vaccinations in the village regularly. At the health center they treat the most common diseases, particularly the many infectious diseases. The center is often built of mud and stick walls with a thatch roof or sun-dried bricks and tin roof construction. Only half presently have an associated maternity though it is planned that each will have maternity provisions.

continued on next page



Nursing staff housing at Kalonda



Medical Director of CMZ Community Health Department, Dr. Makina and his wife, Kasanji



Kabundi, longtime Kalonda Hospital Director, respected as a grandfather around the hospital

The central medical administration has its office building at Kalonda. Its staff is responsible for the supervision of the three levels of health care facilities. As funds permit and transportation is available, physician consultation and technical supervisory visits are made every two months to all centers delivering medicines as well when possible. Administrative duties are added to the visits twice a year. Transportation is provided by the Mission Aviation Fellowship airplane for the more distant centers which MAF also serves to transfer critical patients. Motorcycles or pickups are used for less distant visits.

Personnel-----

The Medical Service is the second largest employer in the CMZ with nearly two hundred personnel. Kalonda employs about sixty including four doctors. Mukedi hospital employs about twenty persons with two physicians. There are four university graduate nurses, about ten graduate nurses from a four-year program and the rest are nursing graduates from two-year programs. Other personnel include midwives which staff many of the maternities, and community health auxiliaries who work mostly in the villages in promotional and preventative care.

Education-----

Education efforts of the Medical Service exist on three levels: midwifery, community health auxiliaries, and nurses training. Two midwifery training classes of six months duration train about twelve midwives each year. Elda Hiebert is conducting one class at Nyanga and Marilyn Derksen another at Kalonda.

The community health auxiliary training school at Kalonda is directed by Citoyen Zangio. High school level students are given six months practical training enabling them to assist a nurse in charge at most of the community health promotional and preventative activities. About twelve to sixteen auxiliaries are trained per year.

Finally in 1983 two nurses training schools were opened, one at Kalonda and one at Mukedi, with options of maternity, hospital and community health nursing being offered. These are two-year courses of study. The Mukedi school is functioning within the Mukedi hospital buildings while the Kalonda school has been combined with the Tshikapa General Hospital school. Classrooms and dormitories are at the General Hospital on the Tshikapa side of the Kasai River while practical work is done at Kalonda on the other side of the river. Direction for this school including the Tshikapa General Hospital program has now been given to the CMZ.



Dr. Richard Hirschler reassembling public health team after day in village of Mochoko



Midwife nurse, Zango, with her son



Mangala, Chief of Surgery Ward, in surgical nursing station, Kalonda

Finances-----

Daily operating expenses of the regular medical service are paid for by receipts generated by patient fees. Additional resources to develop the nationwide rural community health program have been received since 1982 through a program called SANRU 86. This project is approved by the Zaire government and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The funds are distributed through the Protestant Church of Zaire to medical services considered appropriate for their utilization. CMZ presently has two rural health zones approved by SANRU: Kalonda, since 1982, and Mukedi, since 1984. The SANRU 86 funds can be used to subsidize costs of training health workers and medical supervisory visits for a six-year period. Provision of basic equipment and medicine is given for the opening of new health centers. Transportation in the form of motorcycles and a pickup for supervisory visits has been given as well. But all salaries and an increasing percentage of supervisory costs must be absorbed or underwritten by the CMZ Medical Service.

The increasingly difficult economic situation with rampant inflation and a recent six-hundred percent devaluation of the Zaire currency make it very difficult for the churches or the patients to financially support the medical costs. Therefore at present the medical services are facing an area of increased pressure to somehow subsidize health care costs permitting them to remain accessible to all of the population.



Sunday evening feast for the three graduates of the Public Health Auxiliary training program; Dr. Dennis and Shirley Ries on the left

fellow

"You are no longer foreigners and aliens."
Ephesians 2:19



Main boulevard, Kananga

One of the most enriching things during our first term in Zaire was to experience real Christian fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ from a totally different language and culture. The Church in Zaire is alive and active and it was our privilege to become personally acquainted with this church in a variety of different situations, from simple villagers worshipping in mud and stick structures to urban Christians worshipping in rented movie theaters and canvas lean-tos. We got to know our Zairian brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow citizens with us in the kingdom of God.

In coming home on North American Assignment we have become aware that the church in North America has much to learn about the international nature of the church. It is easy to look at our mission work and the church "we" have planted worldwide with pride. We want to claim ownership of the churches overseas and look on the people there as our "spiritual children" rather than our equal brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul's message in Ephesians 2 has a lot to say to us today as the Church is being built on every continent. It was easy for the Jewish Christians to feel a false pride in their rich Jewish heritage stretching back to Abraham and Moses. The Gentile Christians on the other hand, many of which were recently converted from paganism, could have easily felt like second class Christians. Paul wants these Gentile converts in Asia to understand the fullness of their salvation in Christ.



Communion service, Katoka parish, Kananga

The key thought in Paul's letter to the Ephesians is unity: the gathering together of all things in Jesus Christ.

In the first ten verses of Ephesians 2, Paul explains salvation in terms of the individual's vertical relationship with God. God's purposes are to raise persons from the death of sin to new life in Christ. Paul writes, "Because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." v. 4 This new life, made possible only by the grace of God was a tremendous message for these young believers. It is still a tremendous message to us as well.

In the second part of Ephesians 2, verses 11-22, Paul shows that God's purpose was not only to reconcile persons to himself but also to one another. Salvation not only includes our vertical relationship with God but also our horizontal relationships with other people. In this passage Paul is speaking specifically of reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles.

Of their condition without Christ Paul writes, "Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world." v. 12 Now in Christ Jesus, Paul exclaims things are different. "Christ who is our peace has made the two (Jews and Gentiles) one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility between them." v. 14 In Christ the former divisions of race and heritage are cancelled. All are one in Christ.

Paul tells these Gentile believers that they are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people. Roman citizenship was a coveted position in that day. Paul says that in Christ the Gentiles have something far greater than Roman citizenship. They are now fellow citizens with God's people.

For the Jews lineage was very important. Coming from a good family line meant a lot. They tried to show how they were related to Abraham. The Mennonite lineage game is also an important part of our tradition. As we have travelled from church to church this year some of the first questions we are asked have to do with our backgrounds and who are we related to. Paul's answer to Gentiles who could not play the Jewish lineage game was, "Now in Christ you are fellow citizens with all God's people. You are members of God's household." v. 19

citizens

Dennis and Dianne Schmidt

Paul also uses the illustration of a building. Christ is the chief cornerstone of the building. Paul specifically includes the Gentile Christians as an essential part of this building. "And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit." v. 22 Gentiles and Jews were both integral parts of the building. For these new Gentile Christians of that day this was a tremendous message. They were not second class Christians but equal partakers in all that salvation in Christ had to offer. They were part of God's purposes for the world.

For the young churches in Zaire and around the world this is a tremendously liberating message. Paul would say to these young churches today as he said to the Gentiles of his day, "You are no longer foreigners or aliens but fellow citizens with all God's people." You are equal in all respects to your brothers and sisters who brought the Gospel from North America. There is neither African nor American, third world nor first world, developed nor underdeveloped, sophisticated urbanite nor simple village peasant, for you are all one in Christ. More than that you are needed in the building of the church on every continent.

The Gentiles' response was certainly one of joy. But what did the Jewish Christians think? "Wait a minute Paul. Don't you think you are going a little fast. These people have just come out of paganism. How can you say these things about equality? One in Christ? Well maybe, but don't you think they would be better Christians if they would follow at least a few of the Jewish laws?"

What about us today? What is our response to Paul's message of equality? Is our attitude the same as the Jews in Paul's day? We as North Americans have founded churches throughout the world. Do we look at Christians overseas as our children rather than as equal brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we willing to learn from them as they have learned from us?

In our time in Zaire, we found that even though there were lots of problems, Christ was indeed building his church in that situation. We found people with a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and the Church. Their worship services were full of life and enthusiasm. There was a joy in their worshipping together that could only be attributed to the Holy Spirit working among them. We often felt put to shame and shallow in our own commitment. They had more to give us than we could possibly give them. It was impossible for us to think of these people as our children in the faith. They had so much to teach us if we were willing to learn.

Dennis and Dianne Schmidt on the path



Church facilities, Katoka parish, Kananga

The Church today is indeed an international church. In Christ there is no east or west. In a period of international tension, the message needs to be very clear. The church is an international body. The body is not divided by national borders.

We are called today to work in partnership alongside national church leaders. We are no longer in charge. We are called to discern with them the implications of the Gospel for their particular cultural setting. Thus as a church here we need not only to keep informed about our mission work and missionaries overseas but also the national church and what it is facing overseas. We need to keep informed so that we can pray more specifically and thus more effectively for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.

"It is God's love as manifested in Christ that makes us equal, in God's eyes, with all persons.

And it makes all persons equal with us.

We differ in many ways—

in intellect, talents, training and temperament, background and opportunity.

Under God, however, there is no distinction.

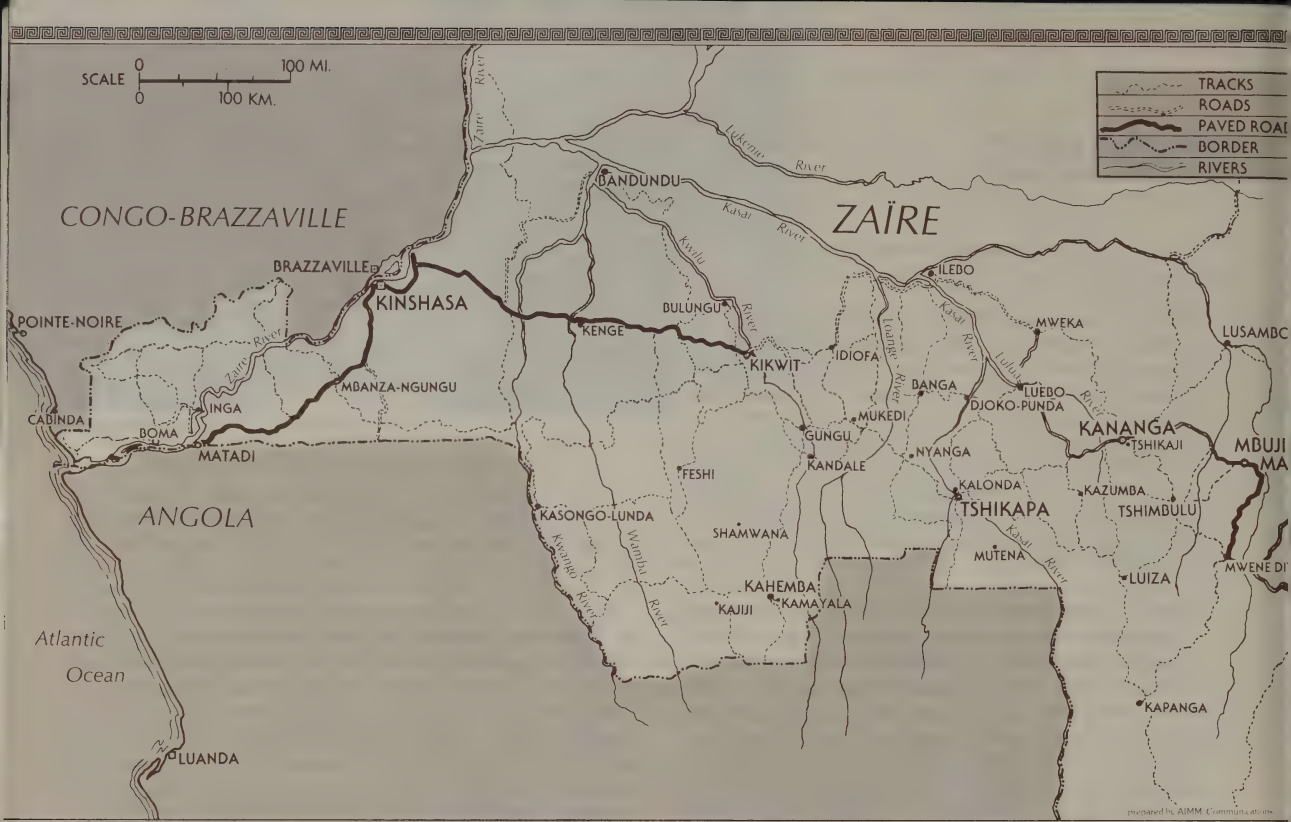
His all-encompassing love levels all barriers and accounts every human creature of equal value and worth.

There are no strangers or aliens in God's family, only brothers and sisters,

And all of us are members of the one body, the body of Christ,

and are commissioned to work together in carrying out His purposes." (from *Epistles Now* by Leslie Brandt)





COUNTRY PROFILE: ZAIRE

AREA

905,568 sq. mi./2,345,409 sq. km.; somewhat larger than the combined area of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan or approximately the U.S. area east of the Mississippi R.; 13.9% agricultural land; contains the Zaire River, second longest in the world (after Amazon)

CLIMATE

equatorial and tropical in the extensive Zaire basin; mild and temperate in higher elevations of east and south; daylight and darkness nearly equal in length year round with little twilight; alternating rainy and dry seasons

POPULATION

27,952,000 (1980 est.); 31/sq. mi.

GROWTH RATE

2.67% per year; urbanization rate of 24% in 1970's

LANGUAGE

official: French, Lingala; other main: Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili; more than 200 others

GOVERNMENT

official name: La République du Zaïre (the Republic of Zaire), adopted October, 1971; form: one party republic, MPR (Popular Revolution Movement); Executive President: Mobutu Sese Seko, re-elected to 7 year term, July 1984; nation composed of 9 provinces

ECONOMY

per capita income: \$126 to \$210; currency: "Zaïres" (Z's) divided into 100 Makutas; 1984: 32 Z's = \$1; tremendous natural wealth with minerals and hydro-electric potential; main earnings from copper and industrial diamonds

URBAN CENTERS

Kinshasa, 3,000,000+; Kananga, 600,000; Lubumbashi, 400,000; Mbuji-Mayi, 350,000; Kisangani, 200,000; Kikwit, 120,000; Tshikapa, 100,000

TRANSPORTATION

nearly 1000 miles of navigable rivers; limited paved highways; extensive but deteriorating road and track network; rail lines between seaport and capital and between Ilebo and southern mining areas, with connection to southern Africa; air service to major urban centers

RELIGION

94.5% identified as Christian; 91.3% are actually "affiliated" with 77% considered "practicing"; 48% are Roman Catholic, 23% Protestant, and 20% African Indigenous (mostly Kimbanguists); of the Protestants 70% are classified Evangelicals; only 3.4% consider themselves "traditional tribal religionists"

One would need volumes to adequately understand a nation as huge and complex as Zaire. "This Is Zaire" is only a brief introductory overview as the second in our series of profiles on the five areas where AIMM is presently ministering.

The region of Africa most often stereotyped is probably Zaire. Thoughts of Tarzan, cannibals, snake-infested jungles and Joseph Conrad fiction still shape the imagination of many that remember central Africa only as the Belgian Congo. For better informed persons concerned about missions the name change to Zaire twelve years ago or the fact that Tarzan never existed comes as no surprise.

But still stereotypes persist. Visions of political rebellions, tribal infighting and chaos of the collapse of the economy and the failure of integrity, difficult living conditions and hopeless travel conditions, readily come to the minds of many North American Christians. Enough facts exist to keep the characterizations alive but the generalizations are often unfair and the specific experiences usually removed from a balanced context.

Yes, Zaire is an exotic part of the world. True, there have been exciting explorations and tragic political upheavals. Certainly ethics tolerated by a culture in transition can be questionable and the infrastructure of a society easily falls into disarray when maintenance is given low priority. But Zaire is far different than most stereotypes. It is far more than problems. It is a region of great potential—potential in natural resources, potential of an assimilation of diverse peoples, potential with colorful cultures and especially, for the kingdom of God, with a vibrant growing church.

More believers in the Mennonite family of faith have Zairian citizenship than any other national identity, with the exception of the United States and Canada. There are half again as many Mennonite Christians in Zaire than in all of western Europe combined. One out of ten persons who call themselves Mennonite in one form or another, live in Zaire today. But their home country is little understood by the rest of the Mennonite family.

This Is ZAIRE



Bapende Mask



Ten years before Columbus discovered the New World, a Portuguese explorer named Diego Cão, sailing along central Africa's Atlantic coast, entered the mouth of a great river. He made contact with a highly developed African civilization, the Kingdom of Kongo. Three years later Cão returned to visit the capital, Mbanza Kongo, fifty miles southeast of Matadi on the river he called the Kongo. His third visit in 1491, the year preceding Columbus' voyage, saw the king of the Kongo, Nzinga Nkuwu, baptized, taking as his Christian name John.

In 1596 King Affonso succeeded this King John I and strengthened ties both Christian and diplomatic with Portugal. He worked vigorously to develop his Kingdom into a Christian society, requesting the king of Portugal "to send us two physicians and two apothecaries and one surgeon. We beg of your highness as a great favor to do this for us because besides being good in itself it is in the service of God."

continued on next page

In 1516, the year before Luther's Ninety-Five Thesis, King Affonso was described by a Portuguese missionary as being "so absorbed in things of Scripture that he forgets himself and whenever there was a public meeting he spoke about God."

Tragically within a quarter century the influence of Christianity was greatly undermined by the developing slave trade. For the next three centuries the curse of the slave trade would drain the heart of the continent of many of its best while destroying the fabric of the societies that had held such great potential. Had the Scriptures properly guided the relationships between the peoples of Europe and the peoples of central Africa how different history might have been. Instead of sharing the message of a Savior with the interior of the continent the slave trade contributed so much savagery and destruction.

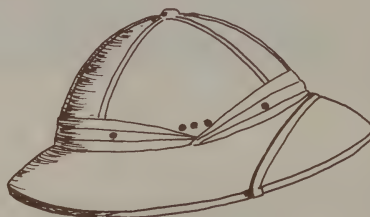
Four hundred years passed before the next significant European contact was made beyond the coastal frontiers but this time it was from the east. Henry M. Stanley took nine hundred ninety-nine days from 1874 to 1877 to travel the length of the Congo River from its headwaters to the Atlantic. His further explorations were intended to arouse British interest in further development but London did not respond. Instead King Leopold II of Belgium was attracted to Stanley's findings.

Leopold founded a personal company which at the 1884-1885 international conference in Berlin was granted sovereignty over the Congo Basin. This Congo Free State, instead of remaining an administrative body following the Berlin guidelines, became Leopold's personal monopoly. A ruthless exploitation of rubber and ivory developed with great and often cruel abuses of the laborers. It is believed the population of the Congo was reduced by nearly half during the quarter century of company control.



Cooking in the market near Tshikapa

By 1908 international clamor for change resulted in the Belgian government taking over the area as its colony. The fifty-two years of the Belgian Congo began with the colony being eighty times the size of Belgium itself.



The philosophy of the colonial administrators was to develop the Congo as a commercially productive colony. Only primary education would be essential for a nation of workers. A paternalism viewed the Congolese as "children" who needed to be taught a European manner of organized production for the benefit of European employers. Learning to work this way would be a "civilizing influence." It was more important to have many persons educated on a primary level before developing the opportunities for higher education. As a result by 1960 only thirty Congolese college graduates existed apart from seminary trained clergy.

Persons with secondary education, and thus French speaking, who adopted European ways were called "highly civilized" or the evolved ones, *évolués* in French. These were the elite who held civil service positions. European authorities held high hopes for a very gradual sharing of power with these "developed Congolese" during the Fifties. In 1956 a Belgian professor proposed a thirty-year plan to prepare the colony for eventual independence. Many colonial authorities derisively viewed this idea of Africans in power within a generation. As a matter of fact within four years the colony was granted independence with little preparation and much misunderstanding of what "independence" would mean.



at Mukedi

The first five years of the independent Democratic Republic of the Congo were years of political, tribal, military and economic turmoil. Military mutinies and rebellion within five days of the Day of Independence, June 30, 1960, combined with widespread disorder as unwarranted expectations of immediate prestige and instant abundance went unrealized.

With the breakdown of law and order and the secession of vast territories from the central government most of the European and North American population including the missionaries were evacuated from the Congo. As did others, Mennonite missionaries began returning to their fields within weeks after evacuation but subsequent sporadic rebellions, some tribal and some ideological, in the following years prolonged tensions and distrust prompting United Nations intervention.

By 1965 separatist regimes in Katanga (now Shaba), Kasai and Stanleyville (now Lubumbashi) had collapsed. Then, in response to rivalry within the central government, Commander of the Army Joseph Mobutu dissolved the civilian government, abolished political parties and declared himself President of the Second Republic on November 24, 1965. Mobutu has continued as head of state to the present. He consolidated power with a new constitution in 1967 which allows his Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR) to be the only legal political group. MPR doctrine stressing an indigenous nationalism known as Zairian authenticity was developed. In 1971 the authenticity movement abolished given Christian names as being foreign, changed European place names to African and adopted an old Kikongo word for "river" as the new name for the nation, the river and the new unit of currency: *Zaire*.

Geographically, Zaire ranks eleventh in size in the world. Comprising most of the basin of the Zaire River system it contains huge mineral reserves as well as great hydrological power potential. With the Zaire River's volume being second only to the Amazon, harnessing its power is no small task. But the huge complex of dams at Inga between Kinshasa and the ocean already is producing vast amounts of electricity. Some is transported by high tension lines more than eleven hundred miles to the copper rich area of Shaba in the south. Zaire could produce thirteen percent of the entire world's hydro electricity.

Zaire leads the world in producing cobalt and in industrial diamonds and is a significant producer of copper, tin, manganese and tungsten as well as rubber, coffee, palm oil and cocoa. Some oil reserves exist along the narrow twenty-seven mile stretch of coastline on the Atlantic. The rain forest of the equatorial region holds vast reserves of timber.

the bus from Kinshasa to Kikwit



Contrary to popular impressions Zaire is not all jungles or rain forest. Much of the land especially in the southern third of the country is grass covered savannah with scattered bush and forests limited to the deep river valleys cutting through the plateaus. With proper agricultural management Zaire could be self-sufficient in food and still export many products.

Notwithstanding great natural resources the economy has teetered on the brink of disaster for the past decade. The sudden drop in copper prices, the rise in oil costs, coupled with mismanagement and overspending, produced extremely high foreign indebtedness and runaway inflation as high as one hundred percent in 1979. The subsequent devaluation of the Zaire, the national currency, to one-sixtieth its original value has required difficult internal adjustments for all.



Ferry crossing

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission has been part of the Zaire scene for nearly seventy-five years. As the Congo Inland Mission, AIMM's pioneer work began in the south central region along the Kasai. Expansion both east to Mbuji Mayi and west to Kandala and Kamayala resulted in AIMM ministering in three provinces, Bandundu, West Kasai and East Kasai. The rapid growth in urbanization at Kinshasa and Kananga resulted in congregations being established in these metropolitan areas. Since 1971 all AIMM work and workers are under the guidance and counsel of the Central Administration and the respective commissions of the Zaire Mennonite churches.

The labors of many servants of the Lord both North American and Zairian over the years have been blessed with a fruitfulness evident in more than six hundred congregations proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The potential of this growing church has far greater significance than even the wealth of the resources in the great African land called Zaire.

compiled by Bob Gerhart



Sue Wagler, of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, Sterling, Kansas, completed two years of voluntary service earlier this year. Her assignment was to teach the missionary children of the AIMM families at Kalonda.

School's Out --
but it was fun!

It's 8:00 and class has just begun at Kalonda Mennonite School 246 (stands for grades 2, 4 and 6). My four students and I share a part of Glenn and Ina Locke's back porch for our "one-room schoolhouse." We follow the pledge to the American flag with a pledge to the Christian flag and then sing "My Country 'tis of Thee."

We marvel together, on this day, as we read of Elisha's miracles during Bible time and our prayer time is special as we thank God for His protection and provision.

Group time ends and the children tackle their individualized lesson plans that I make out for them each day. Going at one's own pace is a definite advantage of our school.

One day each week the students write letters. This week the assignment is to write AIMM and tell what it is like to be an MK (missionary kid).

What do I like best about being an MKT (missionary kids' teacher)? Andre, David, Lenora, and Sarah!

Sue Wagler



With the pupils on the veranda: (standing) David Ries, Andre Hirschler, (seated) Sarah Ries, Sue Wagler, Lenora Hirschler

Dear AIMM,

Kalonda Station

It is fun going down to the Kasai River with the island in the middle of it. It is also fun playing in the dirt and getting dirty and sweaty and then taking a cold bath or shower.

We are now having school on Locke's back porch. This year we have desks made out of mikolo (an African bamboo).

At dusk, I help my Dad feed the ducks and chickens. I also help my Mom run errands.

We can go barefoot all year long. My friend Andre and I can go without a shirt usually.

The thing I like best about being an MK is . . . having fun and going places like Lake Munkamba for vacation.

David Ries
fourth grade
age nine



Students holding sign which reads: Kalonda Mennonite School; Kasai River in background

Kalonda Station

Dear AIMM,

It's great to be an MK. You can go barefoot, even in school, and it's almost always hot. In school we have the same subjects as in the States. I'm the oldest, and I'm the only one in my grade. We have school on Saturdays, but we end school before noon. After school I play and do chores. I usually help take care of the animals we own; which are ducks, chickens, rabbits, a goat, a dog and a cat.

We always wear shorts and short sleeve shirts, except sometimes on Sundays I wear jeans when we go to church. The service is in Tshiluba, the language of this area. At night we go to a missionary's home for church.

My favorite thing about being an MK is just living here. Except sometimes I do wish I was back in the States. That's what it's like to be an MK.

Andre Hirschler
Grade six
age eleven

Kalonda Station

Dear AIMM,

I get up around 7-7:30, and I eat breakfast. We have school every morning except Sunday. I have nine subjects. We have desks made of mikolo. There are four kids in our school and we have two recesses. My favorite subject is penmanship.

I go home at 12:00 and when I get home I help with dinner. Then we eat. We have rest hour after we eat. During rest hour, I usually read or play quietly. I have Super Studies on Monday afternoon with my teacher Sue. I think it's fun. I'm studying animals. I pick an animal and draw a picture of it and then I write about it. I like to play Barbies with my friend Sarah, play softball, and go swimming in the Kasai in dry season. What I like best about being an MK: I have lots of fun and work.

Lenora Hirschler
fourth grade,
age nine

Nov. 3, 1983
Kalonda Station

Dear AIMM,

It is fun in school. I like my teacher Sue. I like to play with Barbies and ride bicycle. The best thing about being an MK is not having school all day and playing all afternoon with my friend Lenora and my little sister Rachel.

Sarah Ries
2nd grade, age 7

Maurice and Joyce Briggs, with their children Peter and Katherine, are en route to Zaire for their first term of service. Maurice will be assuming responsibilities as chief mechanic at the Kalonda Garage and Transport. Maurice brings a wide range of experience and background in mechanics and has previously served with MCC in Kentucky. He has attended Northrup Institute of Technology, Inglewood, California, Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon and Hesston College, Hesston, Kansas. Joyce has studied at Portland State University and Northwest Dental School of Portland. She also was with MCC in Kentucky and has worked in the fields of accounting, teacher's aide and as a city librarian. The Briggs' are from the Coulee City Presbyterian Church, Coulee City, Washington. Their parents are Rev. Kenneth and Johanna Briggs, East Wenatchee, Washington and the late Mr. and Mrs. William Suran.



Stephen and Pat Nelson of the Pine Hills Evangelical Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, left August 20 with their children Stevie D. and Candace for service in Zaire. They will be based at Kalonda where Steve will assume responsibilities in construction and maintenance for CMZ facilities. Steve has vocational training and experience in the building trades. He is the son of Jearl and Mildred Nelson of Moorehead, Indiana. Pat was born in Puerto Rico. Her parents are Phillip and Eppie Wicke of Lima, Ohio. Steve and Pat attended Fort Wayne Bible College and were commissioned as Licensed Christian Workers on July 8 by the Evangelical Mennonite Church.



Evelyn Riediger was commissioned on August 26, 1984 in her home church, Peace Mennonite of Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. Evelyn is going to Upper Volta for her first term. She will be working in the areas of public health and discipling. Evelyn has her RN from Grace Hospital School of Nursing in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and a BA degree in History from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. She has also studied at the Associated Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana. Evelyn served with MCC in public health nursing in Bolivia, South America. Her parents are John and Katherine Reidiger of Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.



Harris and Christine Waltner arrived in Lesotho in early July to assume responsibilities as pastor of the Maseru United Church. They are from the Bethel Mennonite Church in Mt. Lake, Minnesota where Harris has been pastor for the last ten years. Harris has served in pastorates in the States for 30 years. Both Harris and Christine are graduates of Bethel College, Newton, Kansas. Harris also graduated from the Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Chicago). Harris' father is Henry J. Waltner of the Salem Home in Freeman, South Dakota. Christine's parents are the late Jacob and Christina Duerksen, missionaries to India where Christine was born. Christine has worked as substitute teacher and Nursing Assistant in Physical Therapy. The Waltners have three children: John of Spokane, Washington, Carol (Mrs. Stan Buller) of Overland Park, Kansas and Marilyn (Mrs. Joe Loganbill) of North Newton, Kansas.





through aimm

In obedience to
the Great Commission
we are involved in:



Dennis and Dianne Schmidt and son Ryan, have returned to Zaire for a second term of service. Their assignment is in urban and student ministries with the churches in the Kananga area. The Schmidts are from the First Mennonite Church of Newton, Kansas. Their parents are Paul and Jeannette Schmidt of Newton and LeRoy and Evelyn Smith of Walton, Kansas. Dennis and Dianne are both graduates of Bethel College, Newton, Kansas. During their furlough they studied at the Associated Seminaries in Elkhart and took an African Studies course at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana.



Dan and Kathy Petersen and their new daughter, Joy Ramona, have returned to Upper Volta after a six-month medical leave. They will be in linguistic analysis in a language group of Upper Volta as part of AIMM's evangelism and church planting team. The Petersens are members of the Grace Evangelical Mennonite Church of Morton, Illinois. Their parents are Rev. and Mrs. Everett Petersen of Iowa City, Iowa and Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Fluth, missionaries in Cameroon, Africa, now in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Dan graduated from Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota and has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington. Kathy attended Bethel College, St. Paul and has a B.A. in Linguistics from the University of Texas.

- EVANGELISM
- DISCIPLESHIP
- CHURCH PLANTING
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
- YOUTH MINISTRIES
- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
- CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING
- PASTORAL TRAINING
- CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
- BIBLE INSTITUTE
- NURSES' TRAINING
- UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES
- CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING
- THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION
- BIBLE TRANSLATION
- LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS
- VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE
- URBAN CHURCHES
- RURAL DEVELOPMENT
- AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE
- COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE
- BIBLE DISTRIBUTION
- VILLAGE SEMINARS
- HOME ECONOMICS
- WOMEN'S SEMINARS
- PERSONAL WITNESSING
- FRONTIER MISSIONS
- MINISTRY TO INTERNATIONALS
- SUNDAY SCHOOLS
- HOLIDAY BIBLE CLUBS
- HELPING INDEPENDENT CHURCHES
- BIBLE TEACHING
- CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORES
- BIBLE CAMPS
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- HOME BIBLE STUDIES
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- PREACHING
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- MISSION AVIATION
- MISSIONARY CHILDREN
- HOSPITALITY
- PRAYER FELLOWSHIPS
- PERSONAL COUNSELING
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GOING BACK

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EDITORIAL

If Only...



If you could just push a button and produce a missionary. If only there were a machine designed to turn out cross-cultural Christian workers. How handy it would be to have a computer programmed for automatic language learning and cultural adjustment.

But the buttons don't exist. And the mechanical means is not in place for transforming persons of one culture into fully contextualized, properly incarnated proclaimers of the Gospel.

We are grateful for the tools of training and creative communications but there is no easy instant solution to the production of an effective missionary. It takes time—lots of time. Often the time required stands frustratingly in contrast to the urgency of needs and the necessity of a quick response. On the one hand students hear a barrage of pleas and requests from a “waiting world.” There is so much to be done “before the night cometh.” On the other hand students are counselled to take time for thorough preparation, for adequate experience and for maturing in the fellowship of a local church. The dilemmas are great. The tug in several equally appropriate directions can be very strong.

It is true that missionaries are made, not born. But they are not made by machines. There are no simple formulas or programmable buttons. It may be more accurate to say missionaries are grown, not manufactured. Missionaries are grown in the Christian community and many influences shape the future servants of the Lord.

All of us, whether in a training institution or local congregation, the mission agency or the Christian home, need to reflect on our respective roles in growing persons usable by God in cross-cultural ministry.

Since it is going to take time we need to start sooner. If we wait until a young adult has committed his or her life to mission service before we begin nurturing them for caring witness, we have lost important time. If we leave to training institutions the sole responsibility for imparting information essential for understanding the needy world, we will have deprived the Christian worker of a vast source of guidance and counsel. If we leave it to the church alone to build character or to the home alone to sustain commitment, we will hinder the growth of faithful stewards of the Gospel.

Missions is a team effort. The growing of a missionary is a team effort as well. And time effort, too. Solid Bible training and helpful theological studies, developing of skills and awakening of concern for the peoples of this planet, along with the growing joy of walking with our Lord—all are important. Home, church, and school are all involved and none can be reduced to the push of a button.



—RWG



Baptism near Orodara, Burkina Faso



MESSENGER

Volume LI, No. 4

Fall 1984

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

PEOPLE IN PARTNERSHIP

The Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc. is a partnership of five denominations within the Mennonite family of faith. Representatives on the AIMM Board come from the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, the Evangelical Mennonite Church, USA, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Canada, the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Mennonite Brethren Churches. Missionary personnel come primarily from these supporting groups though persons of other churches within the Believers' Church family may also serve on the AIMM team.

25 Years Ago . . .

In 1959 our mission was still known by its original name, the Congo Inland Mission. Colonies had not yet become independent nations and the term "Third World" had not been coined. But the then Executive Secretary, Mr. Harve A. Driver, expressed the goals and convictions of the Mission in memo to the constituency that is still appropriate. The mandate and the methods of the Great Commission are just as valid for us in today's Africa:

We hear so much these days about professional and technical missionaries, new and modern methods of propagating the Gospel in this revolutionary world and the new day in missions that some of us may get the impression that the old methods were not Scriptural, spiritual methods but we want it to be known that the Congo Inland Mission believes that the old methods are the ever new methods. Preaching the Gospel, personal soul winning, village to village visitation, compassionate, loving service are methods that will never be old and never become ineffective. The evangelistic missionary is needed as much in this day as in any day and our mission will continue to send them out as the Lord calls them. We believe in a mission program that sends ambassadors constrained by the love of Christ to bear the word of reconciliation to those who are away from God. This was the method of Christ. This was the method of Paul. This shall be the method of every messenger of the Gospel. This missionary method is summarized in the "Guiding Principles of the Congo Inland Mission" as the ministries of preaching, teaching and healing.



Fulani woman, Burkina Faso

in this issue —

We share with you some of the new experiences and difficult questions faced by our mission personnel in one of newer fields of service, Burkina Faso, the country with Africa's newest name. It was Upper Volta when the first workers arrived in 1978. As new people groups are contacted and new persons respond to the Gospel both missionary and national Believer will need our continued and concerned prayer support. Some guidelines for our praying are shared by the Petersens. All of us have frequently promised to pray. Let's renew our efforts to keep these promises.



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The Cover . . .

Dennis Rempel and Siaka Traore baptizing Dramin.
Easter 1984; Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso)

AFRICA INTER-MENNONITE MISSION

James E. Bertsche, Executive Secretary



AIMM IS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL
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AND THE EVANGELICAL FOREIGN
MISSIONS ASSOCIATION (EFMA)

AIMM MESSENGER

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AIMM MESSENGER



We have been encouraged by many who continue to say they are praying for us and for our work. We are always encouraged to hear that someone has been praying for specific needs, people, and events that we mentioned in our missionary prayer letters, personal letters, and furlough visits. Pray for these specific requests and expect specific answers. But there are many other ways in which we need your prayers even when the details are lacking. In order that such faithful prayers may be focused and fruitful, we offer these suggestions on areas in which we most need your prayer support.

—Dan and Kathy Petersen

How we wish you would pray...



Orodara

The Missionary's Spiritual Life

Jesus told the Pharisee that loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind is the greatest commandment. Pray that we have an ever-deeper love for God; such love should be our supreme motive for service in an over-worked service lifestyle.

Jesus also said the second most important commandment is like the first. Pray that we have a genuine love for others we live and work with, our fellow missionaries and our African neighbor.

Pray that we cultivate a deeper relationship with God. It is often difficult for us to find the time, the resources, or the health necessary for quality devotional and worship hours. Pray too that we find encouragement in this time set aside with the Lord, and that we exercise an effective ministry of prayer.

Pray that we sense the spiritual nature of our combat (Eph. 6:12-13), and that we turn to the indwelling Spirit for guidance and power.

Until we can effectively communicate the Good News in their languages, our lives may be the most effective message for good or for bad, intentionally or unintentionally. Pray that the fruit of the Spirit in our lives casts the image of Christ across all that we do and say.

We have few precedents for the many important decisions we make regarding our personal lives and our work. Pray that God will give us wisdom when we are so lacking in it, because God gives wisdom generously and graciously to all who ask (James 1:5).

We are faced daily with overwhelming need, both spiritual and physical. Pray that our faith be equal to the need, for no task is too great for Him who is with us. Indeed, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given Him (Matt. 28:18-20).

continued on next page



Petersen's housing in Orodara



Dan Petersen, Dennis and Jonathan Rempel

How we wish you would pray

The Missionary's Family Life

We believe that God has ordained both the Christian family and missions, and that He can bring the two together for His glory. Pray for our family—our relationship as husband and wife, our relationship with our children, our children's health and education, and the example we set in the local culture as a Christian family.

Ramona Joy Petersen, August 1984



The Missionary's Physical and Emotional Life

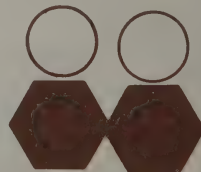
In a world where we are told to expect results NOW, our work requires long-term projects and goals that may not be reached in a decade, let alone within the year. Pray that we not be discouraged, but that we have the steadfastness to work and hope toward an often distant end: the planting and nurturing of the Church.

Though we are fighting spiritual and not physical forces, we are often endangered by very physical threats from those spiritual forces. Pray that we be protected from every manner of physical attack, curse, poisoning, and other threats.

Though we are more than adequately supported financially by the mission and by our home churches, there are many things that simply are not available where we live for any amount of money. Pray that we learn with Paul to be satisfied in all conditions (*Phil. 4:11-13*).

We can no longer take health and safety for granted; despite the best precautions we are bound to experience a smorgasbord of diseases, and to find a simple trip to the doctor dangerous or impossible. Pray for our health and for our safety in travel—and that God's power be greatest when we are weak (*2 Cor. 12:9-10*).

One of the keys to daily living in our work is attitude. Pray that we have a joyful attitude in the most frustrating of circumstances (language, culture, food, climate, loneliness, etc.).



Be A Praying Partner



The Missionary's Work Life

After years of evangelism and church-planting, Paul still asked from prison for prayers that he be bold in speaking about the gospel (*Eph. 6:19, 20*), and we know those prayers were well answered (*cp. Acts 28:31, Phil. 1:12-14*). Pray that we have that same boldness in speaking about the Good News—we are there to proclaim (*Rom. 10:14-15*)!

Pray that God will lead us to the receptive heart, as He led Philip to the Ethiopian official, Peter to Cornelius, and Paul to his Philippian jailer.

Pray that our lifestyle be one of servanthood; that the servanthood of Jesus be our standard (*Jn. 6:38, Mk. 10:42-45*).

One of our most valued commodities is the occasional insight into the local culture. The missionaries on the team are often sharing insights into such matters as dealing with beggars, finding fresh eggs, the best way to express a particular idea in the language, etc. Pray that we will find these gems that make our work easier.

Pray that our relationships with our African co-workers and church leaders be fraternal and free of misunderstandings and tension.

As you pray for us in our work, share our burden for more workers to join us and increase our presence among tens of thousands who know nothing of Christ.

Pray for the myriad business matters that absorb so much attention—the necessary passports and visas, vehicle permits, fees, etc. Pray too that in all these matters we always maintain a good relationship with local and national government offices.

Missionaries and Nationals in consultation, Orodara



Worshipping at Banzon, Burkina Faso

The National Christians

We praise God for new Christians resulting from our mission work and they beg us all to support them in our prayers. So many matters need our constant prayers: a distinctively African church is taking root and maturing. They thirst for the Word in their own language. They work to develop their own leadership. They face persecution from family and village members. They struggle to put their trust in a loving God in spite of sometimes shocking poverty. Don't forget to pray for the growing church as you pray for the missionary.

The Missionary's Furlough Life

We enjoy our short months back in our home churches, and we want to take the best advantage of that time to share news of the mission work, and to be used to challenge our home churches. Pray that we use our furlough times wisely, that we communicate effectively, that we be refreshed by visits with family and friends, and that we find new resources to equip us for our return.

The Sending Church

Motivating the home church to be increasingly involved in missions may be a major concern of the missionary during the furlough months, but it should be one of *your* major concerns at all times. Pray that your churches here in North America have an increasing zeal for world missions; pray for missions-minded church leaders, church programs, and especially for missions-minded young people. Pray that our homes be places where young people first sense the challenge of cross-cultural ministry.

Finally, in all your prayers for the missionary, the national church, and the sending church, pray "*Here am I Lord—send me!*"



This is Burkina Faso is the third in a series of articles on areas in which AIMM ministers. We seek to present an accurate picture of these nations based on the most current information available. Reporting on decisions or policies that may have been taken by governments or organizations in the past does not imply AIMM's endorsement of those actions. We serve in the respective countries as servants of the Lord grateful for the opportunities to share with people God also loves.



THIS IS BURKINA FASO

Burkina what? *Burkina Faso*, the Colorado-size West African country previously known as Upper Volta. For more than three-quarters of a century the French designation of Upper Volta (*Haute Volta*) described this landlocked nation until its name change in August 1984.

Upper Volta was named by French colonists because the Volta River had its headwaters on this inland plateau. Three branches of the Volta River join in Ghana where the waters are impounded in Africa's largest man-made lake before flowing to the sea. These branches of the river were named the Black Volta (*Volta Noire*), the White Volta (*Volta Blanc*), and the Red Volta (*Volta Rouge*), and were symbolized on the Upper Volta flag with three horizontal stripes—black, white and red.

On August 4, 1984, the first anniversary of the coming to power of the present military government, President Thomas Sankara decreed the change of name to *Burkina Faso*, two words representing two different language groups. The name means "the land of the upright or incorruptible ancestors." A new official flag and national anthem were simultaneously adopted to symbolize the government's desire to create its own identity apart from names inherited from French colonial days.

Burkina Faso (pronounced *Boor-keé-nah Fah-sóh*) gained independence, as Upper Volta, in August of 1960 following a 1958 referendum which established the Republic. But its history reaches far back to the Mossi Kingdoms established in the twelfth century. This cluster of peoples under powerful kings enjoyed a high degree of organization, military might and political and social stability. They were able to withstand the Sudanese conquerors that swept through Mali to the north and west. The Mossi resistance to the Sudanese meant resisting Islam as well, and for centuries the *Burkina Faso* area was much less affected by Islam than surrounding territories. The Mossi Kingdoms reached their greatest heights in the fifteenth century. Their nine hundred year control continued until French occupation at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although the religious and symbolic prestige of the Mossi "emperor" in the person of the Moro Naba continued into the 1970's.

The colony of Upper Volta was created from territories separated from Upper Senegal and Niger in 1919 after two decades of struggle, rebellion and repression. In 1932 the colony was dissolved and its territory was distributed to the surrounding colonies of French West Africa only to be reconstructed again as Upper Volta in 1947.

Following Independence in 1960 civilian and military rule alternated as coup d'etats took place in 1966, 1974, 1980, and 1982. The most recent change of government, through a coup in 1983, resulted in Captain Thomas Sankara being declared President and head of the National Council for the Revolution (CNR). Sankara had been named for a time as Prime Minister in the previous administration. Relations with Libya and, most recently, Cuba have aroused concern in some international circles with questions as to the nation's future alignment.

Burkina Faso remains a landlocked nation with deep economic problems. It ranks among the ten poorest nations of the world. The 1982 per capita income of \$210 per year was a twelve percent decrease from the previous year. Total food production actually decreased five percent during the decade of the Seventies while the population increased at an annual rate of two percent.

Only half the land is arable while ninety percent of the population depends on subsistence agriculture growing millet, corn, sorghum and rice along with yams and sweet potatoes for their personal sustenance.

The limited cash crops are cotton, sesame and some sugar cane. Peanuts are grown throughout the country for both home consumption and as an important cash crop. Citrus is being grown with success in the southwestern areas. Cattle, sheep and goats graze through most of the country with sixty-five percent of the livestock raised by nomadic herders. Cattle and cattle products are sold to Ghana and Ivory Coast comprising a sizeable portion of *Burkina Faso's* limited exports.



Little in the way of mineral resources has been discovered. An exception is the high-grade manganese deposits of the extreme northeast which await adequate development. The problems of supporting a large population in this Sahel region with its sparse vegetation is the fact that much firewood has to be imported as fuel for many regions.

Burkina Faso's economic situation has resulted in large numbers of workers emigrating to find employment for varying periods of time in neighboring nations. Eight hundred thousand persons are estimated to be working in Ivory Coast on coffee and cocoa plantations or in the urban centers and ports. Their wages contribute a large share of Burkina Faso's income.

Burkina Faso's population is nearly six times that of Manitoba though only being half the size of that province. Most of the land is semi-arid or arid. Its people comprise nearly sixty tribal groups with distinct language and cultural differences. Citizens of the nation are now called *Burkinabe* (pronounced Boor-kee-nah-bay).



The first Protestant missionaries brought the Christian message to Burkina Faso in 1919. This first effort has resulted in the Assembly of God churches, most widespread of the Protestant groups. The Christian and Missionary Alliance began work in 1923 largely in the western and central areas and Sudan Interior Mission, which is strongest in the eastern region, began work in 1930. A Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions (FEME) was organized in 1961 having affiliation with the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM).

Less than three percent of the population are affiliated with the several Protestant groups. Less than ten percent identify themselves as Roman Catholic. A majority of the Burkinabe are still practicing traditional tribal religions. More than forty percent are Islamic. In many remote communities there is some mixture as traditional beliefs and Islamic cultural forms overlap.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission began work at Orodara in southwestern Burkina Faso in 1978 with original plans to relate to the people through agricultural assistance. The early discovery of a few Christians in Orodara who were looking for spiritual help caused the first Mission personnel to spend more time in discipleship and nurturing. A small church fellowship was established and contacts were made in two outlying areas to the north where small clusters of believers were also assisted.

A second major discovery was the unreached peoples using languages that had never been reduced to writing. Linguistic analysis with a view to translation of the Scriptures into these vernacular languages became an important strategy to communicate the Good News, to demonstrate the love of Christ and to establish His church. The first linguistic team moved into the Tagba-speaking village at Kotoura west of Orodara in 1982. Eleven months later the first commitments of faith in Jesus Christ were made. Since then several dozen Tagba-speaking Believers have identified with the new Christian fellowship. Plans have been laid for linguistic workers to enter two additional language groups by early 1985.

Supplementing these primary emphases have also been a bookstore distributing Christian literature in Orodara, a tape cassette ministry in which tapes are prepared for use with hand-cranked cassette players, and agricultural assistance. A land grant has been received which will enable agricultural and vocational training in appropriate technology to be developed along with a Christian witness. Health care ministries, women's seminars and basic literacy efforts go hand in hand with a strategy of friendship evangelism seeking to reach persons in both the Islamic and traditional tribal communities.

In a radius of one hundred kilometers of Orodara at least six tribal groups still remain unreached by a Christian witness using the vernacular languages. The challenge of sharing the Good News in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner still remains for much of Burkina Faso.

— compiled by Bob Gerhart





prepared by AIMM Communications

COUNTRY PROFILE: BURKINA FASO

AREA:

105,869 sq. mi.; 274,200 sq. km.
slightly larger than state of Colorado,
40% area of Manitoba or Saskatchewan

POPULATION:

6.9 million (1982); 65/sq. mi.; 25/sq.
km. Main ethnic groups: Mossi (44%)
Senufo, Bobo, Gourma, Fulani; 5%
urban, 95% rural; citizens were called
"Voltaic", now called "Burkinabe"
pronounced "Bour-keen-ah-bay"

CLIMATE:

Generally hot and dry, pattern of alter-
nating seasons; Rainy, June to Oct.;
Dry, Nov. to May; rainfall over 24 in.
in southwest to less than 10 in. in
northern Sahel near Sahara

LANGUAGE:

50 languages or more; 10 main incl. the
official, French; 40 tribal dialects

GROWTH RATE:

2% av. from 1970 to 1982; life expect-
ancy 44 yrs; 42% under age 15

EDUCATION:

7% in school; 7 to 12% literacy
630 schools (1980)

ECONOMY:

Agricultural, largely subsistence; limited
mineral resources; Per capita income
\$210 (1982); ranks among 10 poorest
nations in Africa; 500,000 migrate to
neighboring countries for employment
currency: CFA franc; \$1 = 398 CFA francs

URBAN CENTERS:

the Capital: Ouagadougou, 180,000;
Bobo Dioulasso, 100,000; Koudougou,

GOVERNMENT:

Official name: Burkina Faso, adopted
Aug. 4, 1984; Independent since Aug.
5, 1960; one party republic under
military rule; President, Thomas
Sankara since Aug. 4, 1983; formerly
called Upper Volta, area was part of
French West Africa;

RELIGION:

55% traditional tribalistic religions;
43% Islam; 12% professing Christian
including 2.4% Evangelical; largest
Protestant groups, Assemblies of God,
C&MA, and SIM mostly in central and
northeast

What Do We Do Now?



Some Questions about Healing

by Donna Kampen Entz

As a rule Westerners do not depend on God for healing. Sickness in the West prompts taking medicine or seeing a doctor. Basically beliefs are the same as to where sicknesses come from—from germs. Yes, there are a few who believe in divine intervention or faith healing but they are not the norm. In Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) people traditionally went to the medicine man for healing and medicine and more importantly to find out who or what caused the sickness. To deal with the latter problem people often made sacrifices or used fetishes. Through these means they believed God would heal them.

What happens when Christianity arrives from the West and meets this situation? The missionary preaches God's Word which includes stories of Jesus healing people. They add that God heals today as well. Africans believe God's Word often very literally. For many whose lives were radically changed this means they refuse to go to the medicine man for healing or to find out who caused the sickness. They refuse to go because they believe the medicine man's power was from Satan.

What is an appropriate attitude for the missionary? Let's look at three examples. While a pastor was in the bush he was bitten by a snake. After bleeding somewhat he got dizzy and therefore stayed the night. He was able to return home the next morning. Learning of this plight his wife ran quickly to the male nurse in the town who was the pastor's best friend. He came to the pastor's house with white man's medicine and begged him to take some. The pastor refused. He said that he believed that God would heal him without medicine. The nurse begged and begged. Then

other people started coming with suggestions of African medicines or which faith healer he should go see for snake bite. He refused everyone. Instead he walked to a village three kilometers away saying that he came there because all the people were tempting him to take medicine and he wanted to believe in God for healing. He stayed in that village and completely recovered from the bite.

In the second instance a Christian family lived far from town. It was seeding time and the whole family went to the field together. Their third daughter developed a severe fever. They prayed for healing as they were used to praying but continued their planting and let the sick child lay under a shade tree beside the field. The neighbors were all surprised for they would have been running here, there and everywhere collecting leaves and roots for medicine or going to another healer. The fever eventually developed into a paralysis of one arm and leg, perhaps polio. But slowly the child regained strength and use of the arm and leg. As they were praising God for this healing they noticed that the child was walking well but tripping over things in her path. She was going blind. So they prayed again and she regained her eyesight. People all around them were amazed and said how their prayer really is the most powerful medicine to be found.

In this same family the mother was expecting her seventh child. Since they were living in the bush my question was how she would deliver? She responded that she was used to having babies, that she would have the baby alone, and someone would come and cut the cord later, and that is how it happened. She had the baby, washed herself and the baby in homemade lye soap and that was it. No frills. It seemed so simple. In the meantime we were packing up for a major "voyage" to Ivory Coast to the mission hospital where our baby would be born in sterile conditions and I would have expert care. What a contrast between myself and my friend. I told the nurse there it seemed that my friend's faith was greater than mine and yet I believe that God helped me to have a good delivery as well, though somehow my dependence on medical help made me feel a lack of faith. This nurse responded saying, "God helps people through doctors if they have the money to go to the hospital, but he heals poor people directly because they don't have such means available to them." Sounds like an easy solution. May there be some truth in it as well?

continued on next page



in Orodara market



As we work in evangelism and live in dependence upon modern medicine what does our life convey? Since our arrival in Upper Volta our next door neighbors have watched us closely. Recently their six-year-old child died from what we and the doctor suspected to be sickle cell anemia. During that child's four-year illness, the father, a civil servant, refused to take the child to the city for blood tests. We became angry as the child went untreated and the mother resorted to African medicine. I was angry with the mother but then realized that, perhaps, I had responded no better than she had. Neither of us really believed God would heal her child. Was my wanting them to get "white man's medicine" for treatment showing I didn't believe God would heal the child? Was I a testimony for that father?

An example of our dilemma is the woman who does our housework. Not able to have children we took her to the city hospital where an X-ray showed a tumor in the uterus for which an operation is needed. But she also believed that her first husband had cursed her with the sickness. So I set out to teach her to know Christ's message of total liberation. She made a confession of faith and together we have been praying for her healing. She has grown in her faith and understanding but sometimes I wonder if I'm not confusing her. I pray for her healing and yet we continue going to the doctor with her.

To non-Christians, we as Westerners who depend on modern medicine appear the same as Africans who use traditional healing methods. Neither they nor we show dependence on God for healing. This is a problem for Christians but even greater in our relations to non-Christians. Our actions speak louder than our quotes from the Bible. Here in Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) conversion is often dependent on a power encounter where one realizes that God's power is greater than that of fetishes or of a medicine man. This is not a peripheral item of faith but often the center of our evangelistic message.

A young man recently told how he saw the fetishes of his grandfather burn and they couldn't save themselves but the people simply made new ones with their own hands. Then this man saw how his father, the pastor who prayed to God for healing from a snake bite, was healed. This son became a Christian at that point.

There are people around us who have heard the Good News and believe it as the truth but who have not seen God's power exhibited in the lives of Christians. Is our way of living here a stumbling block to these people?



Going to stream for Baptism Service

"On my honor I will do my best
to do my duty to God . . ." Boy Scout Oath



Orodara Baptism, Easter 1984, Seton being baptized

The sluggish opaque water flowed past the bare feet of the young man. The smell which rose from the moss-covered water was offensive to his nose. The decomposed leaves, branches and garbage created an ugly sight for the eyes. What sort of reptilian creatures were lurking in the murky depths? What sort of water-borne microbes haunted the pool waiting to infect an open wound?

The young missionary pastor had come looking for a site to baptize the three young candidates for the church. To clean up the area meant a lot of hard work with only three days until the baptismal service. Quack grass lined both banks of the creek, wove its way down to the water's edge and into the water itself. In the water this mat became a living dam shutting down the flow for thirty or forty yards to no more than a trickle.



Orodara Baptismal Service

Doing My Duty

Reflections by Dennis Rempel

During the following hours of work the pastor wondered if this task wouldn't be "the death of him." Slashing, pulling weeds, slipping and falling into the putrid water it all seemed a nightmare. Could he and his friend endure? Four hours later without having taken a single pause the creek was running clear and without impedance. Hallelujah!

Others passed by during those hours of slavery and gave words of support and encouragement. Not a few had exclaimed, "It is clean. We can swim now." Such words rang in the young pastor's head and he left brimming with self-gratitude and pride. He said to himself, "Look, friend, what you and I accomplished. Won't people realize on Sunday how much their pastor does for them, always things beyond and above the call of duty." Or was it?

Several days later the baptismal service was history. No one seemed to have noticed all the work. Then a passage of Scripture flashed into the missionary's mind, one he had read for a devotional, "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper; get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also when you have done everything you were told to do should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'" Luke 17:7-10 (NIV)

Only my duty? Only my duty. He was only doing his duty, no more, no less, no flourishes because God expects none.

If we have ten gifts we had better use them all because it is our duty. Don't expect a pedestal. They're made of lifeless rock anyway. Do we have "only" one or two gifts? Don't stare at others with "more." Yours is not theirs to do or theirs yours, be it preaching, cultivating, typing, preparing meals, resting, baptizing or teaching others how to fish.

Whose servant am I, come murky creek or clear brook? The King of Life, life and purity. I must remember that no matter what task there is to do it is only my duty not just to "slug it out" or "plug away at it," but to joyfully use the gifts I have to serve my Lord.



Beside the stream for Baptism

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit . . . it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Since we have a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses." Hebrews 4:12-15 NIV

the Go-Between

—Dennis and Jeanne Rempel

The young man arose from the circle of people beneath the mango tree for the third of fourth time. He had asked permission to check a matter with another church leader. "It was like this," he reflected, "each time these types of meetings occurred. White skins trying to understand black skins, each with their own agenda."

It was the meeting of the missionary team and the fledgling national church. Both groups were trying to learn about the other. That was an accomplishment. While the mission agenda was carried out during the more official morning sessions, the church agenda was generally carried out during the schedule breaks and at lunch. Or, as at times like this, where as liaison person, this young believer, Siaka, would ask to be excused to clarify a point, or raise a question with one of the church leaders in private.



Siaka Traore and Dennis Rempel

It was his job, however tiring or seemingly unbrotherly or, perhaps, even appearing dishonest: why not have direct contact? But he'd asked himself that enough times already. As he sat down on the pile of firewood to await the church leader, he mused: "How did he get into this diplomatic position. Where would this lead him?"

Was it his knack for getting out of tight spots with his dad when he was younger? He remembered how he used to take off to the swimming holes along the river instead of helping out around the house, often nearly missing out on school. It had been fascinating to watch the homemade rafts he designed float down the river, or to jump into the river alone or with friends.

It might have been his skill at doing the right movements during the times of Moslem prayers, making a good impression, managing to "keep the peace" but inside sensing an ever growing emptiness.

As Siaka reviewed his life, it did not seem haphazard, but guided by God: having a well-to-do father, going to school next door, growing up where food and fun were not scarce. He could recall traveling from Dad's adopted city in Ivory Coast to the home villages here in Burkina Faso where all his uncles were and finding a good job.

Then he had found out who Jesus was and made a commitment to Him. He could see God's guidance in the events of the last years: discovering the Mennonite missionaries nearby, going to Bible school and building a bookstore. He had made close Christian friends, both black and white; found a family and a place, a church and a Lord to serve. It was never easy, but now life was filled with peace, power, hope, a vision, and these responsibilities.

The wood pile shifted under the weight of the farmer-church leader as he sat down next to Siaka. But neither this nor the rapid Jula spoken in his ear totally disturbed his moments of reflection: "God is indeed in control. But every person comes to these meetings with his own points of view. How to build a church foundation in Banzon? How and if to store grain against a famine? What form of discipling should take place for believers? How to have a viable and respectable witness in Djiguera? Such a diversity of problems are brought, and each person arrives so focused in on his or her own problem. No one seems to see beyond their view of their problem or further than the immediate future. With each issue raised people seem to fall on two sides, or more, because of differing priorities and philosophies. This is why I am needed as a liaison person. Following traditional ways of diplomacy as liaison I must help while trying to instill a long-term vision and common goals.

Siaka Traore

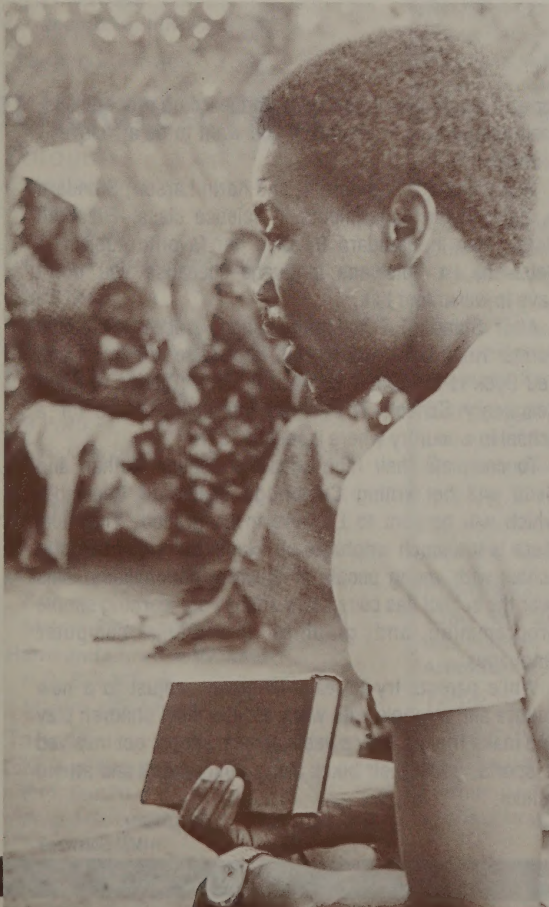


Worshipping at Banzon

"Which problems or issues are the most important? Which views are the inspired ones? Could it be that all of them are? Jesus works, divides and penetrates our lives, operating on us internally, changing, purifying and molding. He doesn't need to work on our surroundings. But we tend to split hairs over issues, often because of differences of opinion stemming from our past experiences and our cultural influences.

"Our fathers did it this way, therefore . . . 'I've found it to be so in my life . . . ' We will never be able to be unified through the traditions of our forefathers, whether African or North American, nor through our experiences. Good and wise though they may be, they will never adequately demonstrate Jesus' redemptive power. Jesus had said: 'It is not what goes into a man, but what comes from within.' Unity is not achieved but assimilated; it exists whether we experience it or not. We are to be of one heart and mind, not one experience."

Rising from his conference with the farmer, Siaka returned to the circle of chairs under the mango tree. Only a few more weeks and he must board the plane for Bangui to attend theological school. It will mean leaving this home, these friends and family, and this church for a future of new experiences. But he is trusting the God who had graciously chosen him, to also prepare him to become a wiser shepherd and counselor. Life for him, the church, and the mission will not be the same during his absence, nor after his return. But unity can remain because of Jesus Christ, and though years may pass, he will be able to return to this mango tree to serve again in the unity and completeness of the Spirit.





Mennonite Ministries School Children

Children of workers with Mennonite Ministries attend school in Botswana. From left to right: Quinn (son of Jay and Cynthia Aeschliman), Heidi (daughter of Buddy and Lois Dyck), Andrew (son of Don and Rachel Horst), Nathan (son of Sara and Fremont Regier), Ted Dyck, Bekah (daughter of Naomi and Henry Unrau), Karin (daughter of Mary Kay and Jonathan Larson), Elizabeth Horst, Nathan Horst, Jennie Larson and Beth Unrau. Photo by Sara Regier.

Botswana's

mmk's

School is an important part of a child's life in Botswana. Parents of the children in this photo are workers with Mennonite Ministries (the joint organization of Mennonite Central Committee and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in Botswana).

One of the exciting things about going to school in Botswana is that you get to wear a school uniform and have a "case" or book bag to carry books, snacks, and gym clothes. School uniforms are a skirt or jumper and white blouse for girls and matching khaki or gray shirt for the boys. In winter you add a "jersey" (sweater) to the uniform. And you must have leather shoes, not "tackies" (tennis shoes).

The school day starts very early in summer, before it gets too hot, and not quite so early in winter and finishes at lunch time around 1:00. Sometimes you go back in the afternoon for activities like swimming, chess, music, tennis, or "practicals." The school year begins in January and ends in December. There are three three-month terms with a month of holiday at Easter time, another in August and a long summer holiday at Christmas! That is because Botswana is in the southern hemisphere.

The school system, patterned on the British system, is a bit different than in North America. Bekah Unrau, Nathan Horst and Quinn Aeschliman began school this year and are in "reception." After reception students complete Standards 1 through 7. Keeping neat notebooks

for each course, writing exams and learning proper classroom etiquette is necessary if you want to be a "clever" student.

Jenny Larson, Standard 4, and Karin Larson, Standard 6, enjoy doing experiments in science class. Elizabeth Horst, also in Standard 6, says her favorite subject is Setswana, a Botswana language—because you don't have to work, just talk.

After Standard 7 the high school grades are called Forms. Heidi Dyck and Nathan Regier are in Form 4 and Ted Dyck is in Form 2 at Maru A. Pula (Clouds of Rain) Secondary School. That is an interesting name for a school in a country where it seldom rains!

To complete their high school education Nathan and Heidi will be writing Cambridge Exams in December which will be sent to England to be graded. They feel there is too much emphasis on exams but enjoy being in school with young people of different nationalities. This year the school has computers so they are learning simple programming and graphics in various computer languages.

While parents try to learn language, adjust to a new culture and struggle with work assignments children play and make friends, buy sweets at local shops, get involved in sports, pedal their bikes along dusty paths and attend school.

Sara Regier

AIMM Botswana

AN AIMM DIRECTORY

The AIMM family
as of January, 1985

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Marjorie Neuenschwander

Tshikapa:

Herman and Ruth Buller

Leona Schrag



ON FURLOUGH

Gail Wiebe

from Burkina Faso (Upper Volta)

IN LANGUAGE STUDY

Tim and Laura Bertsche

Maurice and Joyce Briggs

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COMPLETING SERVICE

Glenn and Ina Rocke (Zaire) to Illinois

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EDITORIAL

MORE THAN A TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Have you played Trivial Pursuit lately? The "in thing" is the fascinating games built around trivia, whether the original version or its spin-offs in sports, show business, Bible knowledge or even a Baby-boomers special version.

Need some gems of information for your next round? Here are some, without the thirty-dollar price tag. How about the fact that Africa is three and a half times larger than the USA? Or that snow is found on the Equator not only in South America's Andes Mountains but in East Africa as well?

Do you know the country with the highest low spot in the world? Lesotho, of course, whose lowest elevation is higher than the low spot of any other country including Bolivia or Tibet.

Which river flows a thousand miles north, more than 500 miles west and a thousand miles south, half the time in the southern hemisphere while the other half in the northern? The Zaire River (or the Congo to "old-timers").

And the newest name on our Africa maps? Burkina Faso, the new label for what we had learned as Upper Volta.

Which nation has the largest number of Mennonites outside North America? Zaire, by far, with more Mennonite Christians than all of Europe combined. Which mission endeavor brings together a partnership of five denominations of the Mennonite family of faith? Correct, AIMM, with nearly eighty on the team working with the growing churches in five areas of the African continent.

But Missions is neither a matter of trivia nor a trivial pursuit. In obedience to One who has authority to give a commission, it is a pursuit to bring the Light of Life into the dark situations of our world. It is not passing on trivia but the sharing of Truth for trusting, and a demonstration of Love for living.

World evangelization was not an afterthought of our Lord but has been at the heart of His program since time began. Producing true worshipers was not to be an option for those so inclined but is at the center of what the Father has been seeking. Christ's own concern was to seek and to save that which was lost. We are to be partners with him in this pursuit.

There's nothing trivial about the Lesotho child who trusts and is no longer afraid, or a Burkina Faso family finding harmony when Christ becomes the head of the home. It's not trivial when a bitter, rebellious Botswana student finds peace as the grace of God transforms, or when the pain of a Zaire patient turns to hope through compassionate ministries of healing. Helping produce harvests sufficient for an adequate diet or teaching skills that will enable employment are not trivial extras but the logical response of those who realize they are both stewards of the Gospel and accountable for God-given opportunities.

We are invited to follow a sending Savior and a loving Lord in pursuit of bringing the Gospel in its wholeness to people who need to experience new life in its fullness. Our task has eternal implications and immediate applications.

There's nothing trivial about it.

—RWG